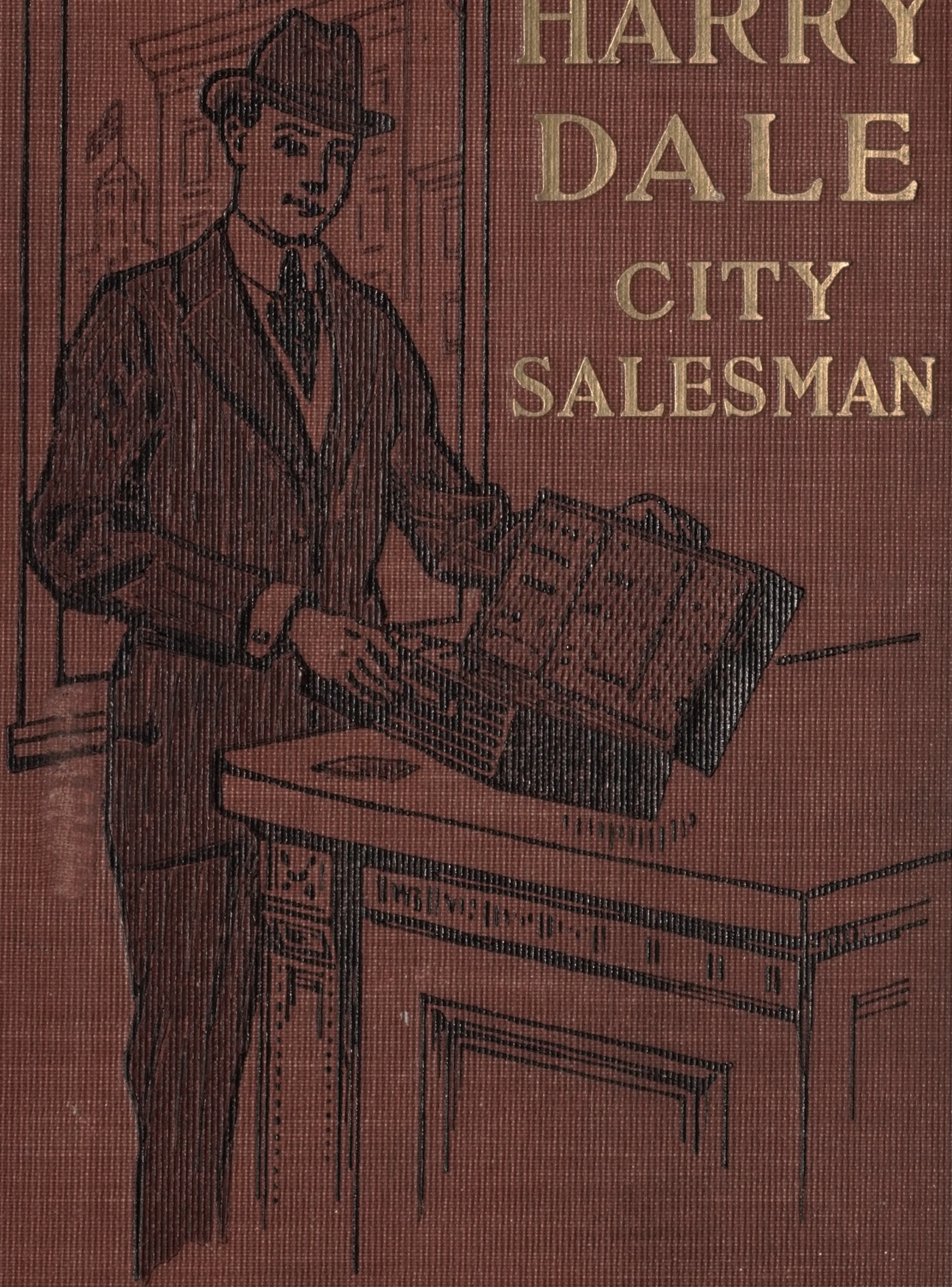


HARRY DALE CITY SALESMAN



SHERWOOD DOWLING





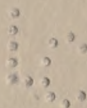
HARRY DALE,
CITY SALESMAN

HARRY DALE, CITY SALESMAN

BY
SHERWOOD DOWLING
AUTHOR OF "STRUGGLING UPWARD," ETC.



ILLUSTRATED BY
GEORGE HARKER



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CHAPTER I

AN UNEXPECTED MEETING

THE young man who likes his job is alive. He doesn't sit back and fold his hands and wait for things to happen.

Harry Dale liked his job. He came out of the salesroom of the Economy Skirt Company with a few samples over his arm. The elevator was several stories above. It was a slow, crawling affair, and its trips were leisurely made. So, instead of waiting, Harry ran down several flights of stairs to the street.

"Can't waste time," he thought. He took a notebook from his pocket and studied the list of firms he would call on that afternoon.

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Harry was city salesman for the A. R. Shepard Company. He had started in the cloth department at the cutting table, but had speedily been advanced to a place as stock clerk. In stock he had worked hard and had used his head, and had not watched the clock. As a result Mr. MacMackin, the department head, had sent him forth to canvas new firms, firms so small that it would not pay to cultivate them with high-priced, experienced salesmen.

Harry had tackled his job with vim. At first he had had a hard time. Then, through using his brains and thinking about his business, he placed a large order with the Economy Skirt Company, and along came another promotion. He was made a full-fledged city salesman with the privilege of selling any firm he could reach be it large or small.

Harry had now been a city salesman for several months. Instead of growing stale, this game of business grew more interesting every day.

AN UNEXPECTED MEETING

He intended to call on a firm half a mile away. He walked rapidly as befitted a man who was thoroughly alive. At a street corner a stream of roadway traffic halted him. And while he stood there waiting, his nostrils suddenly began to quiver and his stomach felt suddenly weak.

What was that smell? Something to eat. For the first time he remembered that he had had no dinner. He traced the odor. It came from a corner restaurant, a quiet little place that he had probably passed a dozen times and had never noticed.

He wanted to be on his way. Each moment, however, he became hungrier. Finally he shook his head and laughed.

"I guess," he said, "my stomach knows what it needs," and walked toward the restaurant.

Though he had not wanted to take the time to eat, he had no intention of hurrying through his meal. While he had been at high school,

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a wise athletic director had told him the importance of taking plenty of time with his food. He knew, too, the folly of loading his stomach with pie and cake. His order was for roast beef, a baked potato, and lettuce salad.

After the waiter departed, he glanced around the place. It was neat and clean and homelike. Harry thought it was the coziest restaurant he had ever found. Now, if the food was good——

The food was excellent. The beef was tender, the potato was not soggy, and the salad was crisp and fresh.

"I'll eat here often," Harry thought, and gave thanks that he had found such a place.

A shadow fell across his table.

"Why, hello!" said a voice. "If this isn't Dale."

Harry glanced up. A young man stood facing him, a young man whose clothes were of the latest cut and fashion, a young man who

AN UNEXPECTED MEETING

carried a cane, a young man from whose lips drooped a cigarette.

"Why, hello, Billings!" said Harry. "What are you doing here?"

"Eating," said Billings, "up to a moment ago." He drew out a chair and sat down. His hand rested lightly on the table, and on one of the fingers Harry saw a diamond ring. He thought that Billings had intended that he should see the ring.

"Well," said Billings, "how goes it with you?"

"All right," said Harry.

Billings yawned. "Still holding down my old job in the broadcloth stock?"

"No," said Harry. "I'm selling goods."

At that Billings's yawn vanished. He sat bolt upright. "Selling goods?" he demanded sharply.

Harry nodded.

Billings stared at him. Why, he was only a kid. Selling goods? Pshaw! they probably

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had him carrying samples for some of the real salesmen.

"A. R. Sheppard's going back," Billings said loftily. "Believe me, I'm not sorry I quit them."

Harry struggled to hide a smile. Billings had not quit; he had been discharged for neglecting his work. And, judging by appearances, he had not changed for the better.

"I'm selling goods myself," Billings said, "for a live firm." He took a leather, gold-monogrammed card case from his pocket and handed Harry a slip of pasteboard. Harry read:

A. W. BILLINGS

Representing

PRINCE, HENDERSON & PRINCE

"Some firm," said Billings; "you have to be a live wire to work there." He selected another cigarette. "Smoke, Dale?"

AN UNEXPECTED MEETING

Harry shook his head.

"I couldn't get along without my puff," said Billings. "But, of course, it must be good tobacco. I pay thirty-five cents a pack for these. What do you know about that?"

"It's a lot of money," said Harry.

Billings waved an airy hand. "It's a gentleman's smoke. I believe in doing things right. I'm getting on in the world, too. Last month I sold \$3,000 worth of goods."

Harry said nothing. Last month he had sold almost \$4,000.

"They like me down where I am," said Billings. "I tell you, it pays to get into a house where things are appreciated. Do you remember Claxton?"

Harry did. Mr. Claxton was one of the salesmen of the cloth department.

"Now take Claxton," said Billings. "When I was down there he was always riding me because I took pride in my personal appearance. Where I am now they like it. They

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know I'm a gentleman. So they try to push me along." He gave Harry a glance. "Of course, I don't want to be offensive, Dale, but I'm older than you. I know a bit more. You ought to throw a better front."

"A better front?" asked Harry.

"Yes. You ought to dress better. Get a little style. It helps a whole lot."

This time Harry's smile was broad. He was well satisfied with his own neat business suit. Billings saw the smile.

"Of course," he said, "if you're not really selling goods——"

Harry handed him a card:

HARRY DALE

Cloth Dept.,

A. R. SHEPPARD CO.

Billings winced. There could be no doubt but that Harry was selling goods, for the Sheppard Company did not allow stock clerks

AN UNEXPECTED MEETING

to use business cards. He had come over to the table expecting to patronize Harry and make him feel cheap. And here was Harry holding a job probably as good as his own.

Yet Billings, after that first moment, affected a vast unconcern.

"I guess the Sheppard people *are* going back," he said. "A man has to have class to hang on with Prince, Henderson & Prince."

"You have the class," Harry admitted.

"Now you've said something," Billings grinned. So he had impressed this youngster! Well, things were not so bad, after all.

Harry, who had finished eating, glanced at his watch. It was a plain, silver timepiece. Billings, with an air of unconcern, plucked out a gold watch that was wafer thin.

"Three-fifteen," said Harry.

"Correct," said Billings. He arose and yawned. "Out late last night," he explained.

Harry paid his check. They walked to the door.

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"Anything on tap?" Billings asked. "Run along to my club."

"Your club?" Harry looked at him in surprise.

"A man must belong to a club or two," Billings said indifferently, "if he's going to cut any ice. Come along."

But Harry shook his head and explained that he had work to do.

Billings was aghast. "At this hour of the day?"

"Yes."

"Good night! Why, the day is over."

"Oh, no." Harry laughed. "Why, I can see four or five people before six o'clock."

"And do you work that late every day?"

"Every day but Saturday."

Billings whistled. "You must be hard up for sales. Why, I sold four bills before one o'clock. So I go and eat a quiet meal and then I'm through. What's the use of killing yourself?"

AN UNEXPECTED MEETING

"I don't like sitting around doing nothing," Harry said.

"Every man to his own taste," Billings yawned. "I wouldn't think of starting in to work after three o'clock. You won't come to the club?"

"Not today, thank you."

"Well, so long. See you some other time."

Billings strolled off down the street, swinging his cane with careless ease. Harry shook his head. He was half-amused at the other's pretensions, and half sorry to see him pursuing such a course.

"Poor Billings," he said. "He'll never get anywhere that way."

CHAPTER II

THE DAYLIGHT CLUB

FOR several days Harry was a busy young man. It was early summer. Goods for the fall trade were beginning to move. At this season of the year, though lightweight fabrics still sold, the heavier cloths made the most work. Manufacturers were busy making up sample garments for the fall and winter trade, and there was heavy buying of five- and ten-yard cuts. The total of these sales did not bulk large. Yet there were so many of them that they required a deal of labor. Harry did not have much time during the day to think of anything but business.

In the evenings, though, his mind several times drifted back to Billings. He had nothing against the former stock clerk, but he

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hoped their paths would not cross any oftēner than was necessary. That they would occasionally meet was almost a certainty. Prince, Henderson & Prince were a cloth house. To this extent they were rivals. Handling the same line as they did, it was probable that at times they would be canvassing the same houses.

Selling goods was not all peaches and cream. Many times Harry found himself perplexed by problems and disheartened by failure. Sometimes the sale he thought was as good as made slipped through his fingers. But by degrees, as he went on with his work, he learned that it was best to try to take the good and the bad with philosophy.

Mr. Hecker, one of the older salesmen, often helped to steady him.

"A man mustn't always be watching for results," Mr. Hecker said. "I don't mean he should be careless of results. He should endeavor to bring himself to a point where he

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can get satisfaction out of the fact that he has worked faithfully and well, and should try to make himself believe that good work in the end will always bring its reward."

Harry's face looked as though he did not quite understand.

"I'll put it another way," Mr. Hecker smiled. "At high school you played football?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did you always win?"

"No, sir."

"Were you disappointed when you lost?"

"Oh, yes."

"Bitterly disappointed?"

"Well——"

"Yes; go on, Harry."

Harry smiled. "I see what you mean. Even though we lost, we still had had the fun of the game and the knowledge that we had played hard. There was also the feeling that next time we'd win. You mean that the man

THE DAYLIGHT CLUB

who plays the business game fair will get a lot of satisfaction out of that. If something goes wrong, he doesn't have to accuse himself of having spoiled his chances. No matter how hard he loses today, tomorrow he has another chance to win."

"If he doesn't quit," said Mr. Hecker.

Harry laughed. "No fear of my quitting. I get discouraged only for a little while."

By the end of a week Harry had completely forgotten Billings. Then, one morning, his telephone rang.

"Dale?" a voice asked.

"Yes; this is Dale."

"Hello, old man!" came the voice again.

"Busy?"

"No."

"Good. This is Billings."

It happened that for once Harry was not busy. Nor had he planned to visit his trade that afternoon. He had thought to spend an hour or two cutting samples and reading the

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trade journals. Yet, when he heard the voice say "Billings," he was sorry that he had answered so promptly.

"Made a couple of sales last week," Billings boasted. "Crackajack sales. I want to celebrate. Take dinner with me, will you?"

Harry hesitated. He wished that he hadn't been so ready to admit that he was idle. However, having admitted idleness, he could not refuse the invitation without giving offense.

"All right," he said half-heartedly.

"Meet me at Connie's," Billings went on. "You know, the place where we met once before. One o'clock sharp. I'll be looking for you. Good-by."

"Good-by."

Harry came away from the telephone vaguely puzzled. Why had Billings invited him to dinner? In the old days they had never been friendly. Billings had even hinted, when he left Sheppard's, that Harry had been re-

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sponsible for the loss of his job. Yet here he was extending invitations.

"He wants something," Harry reflected. "He has an ax to grind."

A few minutes before one o'clock Harry entered the restaurant. Billings sprang up from a seat in the rear of the place.

"This way, old man," he called. "I had this table reserved."

Harry took the other chair. Billings had blossomed since their last meeting. He now had a diamond stick pin, and an expensive looking cigarette case lay alongside his napkin.

"Did you bring your appetite?" he asked genially. "I like to do the thing in style when I start. How about some oysters, a tomato bisque, some roast lamb and peas, a salad, coffee and ice cream?"

Harry protested weakly that he never ate much of a dinner.

"Shucks!" Billings laughed. "We'll have

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to educate your stomach. What do you say to a cocktail?"

"Thank you," Harry answered, "I don't touch liquor."

Billings gave a superior smile. He nodded to the waiter. Presently the man brought him an amber-colored drink. Billings tossed it down his throat.

"That's the stuff to give you an appetite," he said.

Harry said nothing. He thought he knew a better way: hard work, a good walk in the open air, and eight hours sleep at night.

The dinner ran its course. Over the oysters Billings confided that the house of Prince, Henderson & Prince thought him a wonder. While he ate his soup he enlarged on the duty of a salesman to mix in and get acquainted.

"Nothing like it," he said. "The more friends you have the better off you are. And where do you think is the best place to make friends?"

THE DAYLIGHT CLUB

Harry didn't know.

"A club," said Billings. "Meet the men in your own line. Swap experiences and ideas. That's what does it."

Several times, while they ate the lamb and peas, Billings spoke further about the value of places where men could gather. When the ice cream was brought, he leaned across the table with an air of confidence.

"How about it now, Dale, do you belong to a club?"

Harry shook his head.

"Mistake," Billings told him earnestly. "I never knew a good fellow who wasn't a clubman. It's classy. It means that you're somebody."

The thought came to Harry that he wasn't so much interested in being a good fellow as he was in being a good salesman.

"I've taken a liking to you," Billings went on. "You're only a kid and I want to see you get on the right road. 'Help one another!'

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That's my motto. I'm going to put up your name for membership in the Daylight Club."

"I—I don't think I'd care to join," Harry protested.

"What!" Billings looked at him with an air of surprise. "Don't care to join? How's that?"

"I don't think I'd care for a club."

"How do you know? Did you ever belong to one?"

"No."

"Then how do you know?"

Harry was at a loss for an answer. He felt that Billings had him cornered. And Billings, seeing his hesitation, adopted an injured air.

"That's a fine way to insult me," he said.

"Insult you?" Harry's eyes opened wide.

"That's what I said. I suppose you didn't mean it, though. Well, I suppose I'll have to put you straight. When one gentleman says that he'll propose another into his club, it's a big honor. It's a sign of confidence. When I

THE DAYLIGHT CLUB

say I'll propose you in the Daylight Club it's just the same as telling you that I think you're all right, and that I'm standing for you, and that I want you to meet all my friends. You didn't look at it in that light, did you?"

"No," said Harry.

"And about not liking clubs—— Pshaw! How are you going to know you won't like it? Ever been inside a club?"

"No."

Billings blew a cloud of smoke toward the ceiling. "I tell you what I'll do," he said. "I'll take you around to the Daylight Club. No harm in looking it over, is there?"

"N-no."

"Well, come along. I'll take you around there now. Then you'll have an idea what it's like."

Harry did not see how he could refuse. He had an idea that Billings had invited him to dinner for no other purpose than to bring up this subject.

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Billings paid the dinner check, and took pains to see that Harry should observe that the waiter had been given a twenty-five-cent tip. They came out to the sidewalk. Billings deplored the absence of a taxicab, explaining that he always liked to go to his club like a gentleman. If that was the kind of club it was, Harry was quite sure that his visit would be wasted. He wanted nothing to do with expensive things like taxicabs. A trolley car was good enough for him and far cheaper.

They walked along the avenue, and Billings spoke at length about the advantages of club life, a place to rest after a strenuous day, an atmosphere of breeding, the companionship of good fellows. When he said "strenuous day" Harry almost smiled. Billings and a strenuous day seemed to have little in common.

They came to the wholesale dry goods district. Set among giants of business houses was

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a narrow, two-story building. Harry had often wondered what it could be. Billings led the way up the six steps that led to the doorway. He took a key from his pocket, and a moment later they were inside.

The hall was dark, and musty, and heavy with stale smells. Upstairs there were loud voices. Somebody pounded on the floor, and a voice yelled to stop that racket.

"They're having a good time," said Billings.

He led the way upstairs. From the top of the landing they looked into the first of three rooms. The air was thick with tobacco smoke.

"Gentlemen," said Billings, "I take pleasure in presenting Mr. Dale of the Sheppard Company."

A dozen young men crowded around Harry and were introduced. The last was Arnold Keith, a blond young fellow with tired, heavy eyes and a pale, washed-out face.

"Keith is assistant buyer for the Crescent

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Cloak and Suit Company," Billings explained. "Hard work keeps him thin."

Keith winked. "Very much. I wish I were rich. I'd show you fellows how to live."

"Keith is a high-flyer," Billings added.

Keith took this as a compliment. He stuck his thumbs in the armpits of his vest and rocked back and forth on his heels.

"Coming into the club?" he asked Harry.

"I'm proposing him at the next meeting," Billings said hastily. "I thought I'd bring him in today and show him around."

"That's the stuff," said Keith. "No trouble to show goods. Come along, Dale."

Harry was led into the front room. Four members were playing pool at a table that had certainly seen better days. Just as they entered one of the players made a shot, and a ball dropped into a pocket. The player banged his cue on the floor.

"That's her," he said. "Come across, gentlemen."

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The other players tossed coins at him, and he caught them deftly. Harry felt a chill of dismay. Why, they were playing pool for money. This was gambling.

"Can you beat it?" Billings asked. "When you've been running around the city and you're tired, drop in for a game. It rests you up. You go out feeling like a new man."

Harry was sure that if he breathed much of that stale, smoke-laden air, he'd go out feeling like an invalid.

They went back to the room they had first entered. Here chairs were drawn up around tables on which rested reading matter. Harry expected to see trade journals and business magazines. Instead, the publications seemed all to be of a frivolous nature. Young men sprawled indolently in the chairs, and smoked and gossiped.

"Isn't that restful?" Billings whispered. "That's the way to take your ease."

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In the last room another group of young men were playing cards at a green-covered table. For a few moments Harry looked on. It did not take him long to discover that this game was for money, too.

"There's one thing about this club," Billings told him earnestly. "It's made up of gentlemen. You could play cards here all day and you'd never get cheated."

Harry was disgusted. He plucked out his watch and remarked that he had to get back.

"I thought you weren't busy," Billings said suspiciously.

"I must get samples ready for tomorrow."

Two of the players looked at Harry suspiciously. Billings laughed.

"Dale is a busy bee," he explained.

"He's young," Keith chuckled. "He'll get over it."

Harry moved toward the door. He expected Billings to follow. But the card players were making room around the table and



“‘It’s made up of gentlemen.’”

THE DAYLIGHT CLUB

drawing up another chair, and Billings was taking off his coat.

"So long, Dale," he said. "Glad you came around. Hope you'll like us. I'll put up your name at the next meeting."

Harry shook hands. As he reached the hall an argument broke out at the pool table. One of the players called another an ugly name. Then footsteps ran through the rooms. A voice said something about keeping quiet or things would be queered. Harry was sure that the voice had been that of Arnold Keith.

The air of the hall seemed viler, if possible, than when he had first entered the house. He stumbled down the stairs, feeling his way with his hands along the wall. Presently he came to the door. He had some difficulty with the lock, but at last it opened, and he stepped out into the sunshine.

Eagerly he took several deep breaths as though to clear his lungs of something foul. How good the sunshine was! How warm and

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sweet the air. In the house that he had just left these men kept the windows almost closed, and spent hours in a reeking, stale atmosphere. Harry shivered.

As he started down the few outdoor steps he was conscious that two men had stopped on the other side of the street. As he reached the last step he raised his eyes. Mr. Hecker and Mr. MacMackin were staring across at him, and the face of the head of the cloth department was stern.

CHAPTER III

GOOD ADVICE

HARRY felt the blood rush into his face. He bowed, and wondered if the men would come over to him. Instead, Mr. MacMackin nodded curtly and spoke to Mr. Hecker. They walked on.

"Something told me not to come to this place," Harry muttered.

From the glance that Mr. MacMackin had given him, he was quite sure that the head of his department knew the Daylight Club and what it was. And he was equally sure that Mr. MacMackin thought him a frequenter of the place.

Harry had intended to go directly to the cloth department. Now, however, he was too much upset to think of work. He walked

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through the streets of the dry goods district for half an hour until he found himself calmer.

As he turned his steps toward the big building of the A. R. Sheppard Company he thought of going straight to Mr. MacMackin and telling his story. At first this plan seemed good; but as he thought it over it began to lose its charm. He thought that if he went running around with explanations before he was accused of anything, it would look as though he were the possessor of a guilty conscience.

When he reached his desk in the cloth department there were a few letters awaiting him. Two contained small orders. Another letter asked for samples. He collected the goods ordered, made out shipping tickets, and started them downstairs toward the entry department. He cut his samples and dropped them down a mail chute. Then he set to work cutting the samples that he would use on the morrow.

GOOD ADVICE

Several times he saw Mr. Hecker. The salesman, however, said nothing about the Daylight Club. Harry thought, though, that Mr. Hecker looked at him appraisingly, and he was hurt. The veteran salesman had been one of his staunchest friends, and had always been ready with advice. Harry felt another impulse to explain. However, he choked it down. He was resolved to wait.

Once that day he met Mr. MacMackin in an aisle. The department head asked him a few business questions and turned back toward his office. His face had been a mask.

When closing time came, Harry left the store rather disappointed. He had hoped that an explanation would be demanded of him. Nothing, however, had been said about that meeting outside the club.

At home that night the boy told his father. Mr. Dale listened attentively.

"It would have been just as well," he said, "had you gone to Mr. MacMackin at once.

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There is little that goes on in the dry goods district, I fancy, that he does not know. He probably is aware of the nature of the Day-light Club."

"I'll go to him in the morning," Harry vowed.

Mr. Dale shook his head. "You're too late, son. It might look as though you waited a day so as to make up a story that would hold water. So long as you allowed your first opportunity to pass, I should advise that you wait a bit longer. And hereafter, whenever you find yourself in a questionable position, come right out in the open. The man who is honest need never fear, nor has he anything to conceal."

Next morning Harry came to the store, attended to his mail, and went forth with his samples. He had rather a good day. At five o'clock he returned to the store, wrote out the orders that had to go at once and handed them to the stock clerks. The other orders he

GOOD ADVICE

wrote, but left them where they could be made up first thing in the morning. While he worked Mr. MacMackin twice passed his desk.

"You're becoming the popular hero," Mr. Claxton told him. Mr. Claxton was a merry salesman with a fund of stories. He believed in selling goods on his popularity, and he had a habit of praising all goods to the skies. More than once Harry had questioned the soundness of his method.

"I say," Mr. Claxton repeated, "you're becoming the popular hero."

"Am I?" Harry looked around. "How's that?"

"Somebody called you a dozen times today." The salesman lowered his voice. "Seen anything of our old friend Billings lately?"

Harry's heart skipped a beat. "Why?"

"I thought it was Billings's voice."

"I—I met him once or twice," Harry admitted.

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"Well, well! Has he improved any? Does he still manicure his nails? Is he still the Beau Brummel of them all?"

Harry laughed. "The same old Billings, I guess."

"I thought as much." Mr. Claxton sighed. "To think of all the fatherly advice I wasted on that fellow. I had an idea that losing his job here would wake him up. Well, I'm thankful that you, at least, are a credit to my teachings."

Harry smiled. It was a cheerful habit of Mr. Claxton's to claim a share of credit for any good that happened in the department.

Harry was sure that Billings would continue to call him. He was equally sure that he did not want to meet the young man who was cutting such a shine at Prince, Henderson & Prince's. He got in the habit of leaving the store early in the morning, and he stopped eating at Connie's. And thus a week passed.

GOOD ADVICE

"Did Mr. MacMackin ask you about the club?" Mr. Dale inquired one night.

"No, sir," Harry answered.

"Have you noticed any change in his treatment of you?"

"Not now. I thought at first that he acted queerly, but I guess I must have imagined it. Everything's all right."

Mr. Dale nodded. "Perhaps he thinks that as you're doing a man's work you're old enough to know what's good for you and what isn't."

"Of course I am," said Harry.

Mr. Dale smiled. "At the same time," he went on, "he is a man who takes a great interest in the young chaps he is developing. It isn't like him to let a thing like that slide. If he thought you were getting into bad company he'd bring it up sooner or later. You may hear from him yet."

Harry, however, did not let that worry him. As a matter of fact he had concluded that Mr.

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MacMackin did not know the nature of the club.

Another week passed. Orders began to come in to Harry from the manufacturers to whom he had sold small cuts. His hard work, day after day, was beginning to tell. There was every prospect that he was going to have a fine season.

Each Saturday morning the department bookkeeper, a Mr. Creighton, gave to Mr. MacMackin a statement showing the amount of goods each salesman had sold that week. On this particular Saturday morning the list showed that Harry was going ahead in fine style.

The department head studied the list and sent for Mr. Hecker. Together they talked it over.

"Dale!" Mr. MacMackin called.

"Yes, sir," Harry answered.

"This way, please." Mr. MacMackin and Mr. Hecker walked into the department

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head's little office. Harry followed, wondering what in the world this conference could be about.

"Dale," said Mr. MacMackin, "I do not want to swell your head, but the fact remains that you show great promise. I should not tell you this were it not that you are a steady, hard worker. Hard workers, as a rule, can stand a bit of praise."

Harry flushed.

"I have the weekly report on my desk. For a young salesman you are doing very well. You should, in time, develop a fine trade. You have a future, Dale, and I do not want to see that future ruined."

Harry's flush deepened.

"If I did not take an interest in you," Mr. MacMackin went on, "I should not speak to you along this line, nor would I say what I am about to say. I have always treated you fairly, have I not, Dale?"

"Yes, sir."

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"You know I have your interest at heart?"

"I am sure of it, sir."

"Then please understand that I have your interest at heart when I question you. Are you a member of the Daylight Club?"

The flush left Harry's face. "No, sir," he answered.

"Are you about to become a member?"

"No, sir."

"Ah!" Mr. MacMackin seemed pleased. Mr. Hecker smiled as though he had heard good news.

"A few weeks ago, Dale, Mr. Hecker and I met you——"

"I remember that day, sir."

"Ah! Were you coming out of the Daylight Club on that occasion?"

"Yes, sir."

"You had been in the club?"

"Yes, sir."

"How did you come to go there?"

"A member took me there."

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"What for?"

"He wanted to propose me for membership."

"And has he proposed you?"

"I—I think so," Harry answered.

A shadow passed over Mr. Hecker's face. Mr. MacMackin leaned forward.

"Let's get this straightened out, Dale. You say you are not going to become a member. Yet you have been proposed——"

"I did not ask to join," Harry interrupted. "Billings——"

"Who was that?" Mr. MacMackin broke in sharply.

"Billings, sir. The man we had in the broadcloth stock. He is now a salesman for Prince, Henderson & Prince. I met him in a restaurant. Later he telephoned me and wanted me to take dinner with him. I did so. He wanted me to join his club. I declined. I said I thought I shouldn't like it. He said I couldn't tell until I saw the club, and insisted

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that I go for a visit. I did not see how I could very well refuse to look at the place, so I went along."

"Did Billings say what kind of club it was?"

"He said it was a club of young gentlemen."

"Ah!" Mr. MacMackin's smile was sarcastic. "What do you think of it, Dale?"

Harry stared at the floor. "I should rather not say, sir."

Mr. Hecker's lips twitched.

"Very well," Mr. MacMackin said briskly, "I won't press you. Will you tell me, though, when you decided not to join?"

"The moment I saw it, sir."

"Why?"

Harry hesitated a long time. He did not carry tales about what he had seen, and yet he thought that his superior was entitled to a truthful answer.

"I did not think," he said at last, "that I would receive any benefit from such associations."

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"Good boy!" said Mr. Hecker under his breath.

It seemed that all the starch and stiffness left the little office. Mr. MacMackin unbent and smiled genially.

"Dale," he said, "it does me good to hear that answer. You had me worried. I have seen many a young man go wrong because he didn't know the danger of the first false step.

"I understand why you did not tell me what you saw. However, I know the Daylight Club. It has a mighty poor reputation. And now, Dale, if you will permit me, I'm going to lecture.

"Steer clear of places like the Daylight Club. They are a great temptation to many young men doing your kind of work. To a considerable extent your time is your own. You do not have to punch a time clock. You are away from the office with no one to watch you or report on what you do. If, by eleven

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o'clock in the morning you have made quite a good sale, you can loaf the rest of the day if you want to. That is the first mistake.

"No man can sit around and do nothing. He must do something. And if he lays down on his job, he must do something else. He looks for amusement. He has idle time. He meets other young men who want to loaf. Sooner or later he finds himself in some sort of lounging place, the Daylight Club, for instance. He finds young men consuming great numbers of cigarettes—— How many of the men in that club were smoking cigarettes, Dale?"

"All of them, sir."

"I thought so. With many young men, idleness and cigarettes seem to go hand in hand. Well, let's get back to this young man I had in mind. He drifts into one of these clubs. But even there he soon gets tired of just sitting around. He wants to do something, so naturally he does what the others are doing. He

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begins to play cards for money. He starts to shoot pool for money. Next he starts to take a drink. You can guess the rest of the story, Dale."

"Yes, sir," said Harry; and then he added from the depths of his heart: "I want none of it in mine."

The remark was so slangy and so pert that Harry was sorry he had made it. But Mr. MacMackin gave him a rousing slap between the shoulders.

"Stick to that, Dale," he said, "and you'll be all right."

Harry went back to his desk. He felt mighty good. He had been asked to explain and he had explained, and his word had not been doubted.

His telephone rang. He took down the receiver. "Hello!" he called.

"This Dale?" came a voice.

"Yes."

"Well, for the love of Mike, have I found

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you at last? Where have you been keeping yourself? This is Billings."

"I've been busy," Harry said.

"You must have been. I've got your application all ready, but I can't put it in until you sign it. Are you going to be at home tonight?"

"Yes."

"Good. I'll bring the application around, old man, and you can sign it there."

"You needn't bring the application," Harry said distinctly.

"No? Why not?"

"I'm not going to join."

There was a moment of silence.

"Look here, old man," Billings protested, "this is a bad throw-down. My friends like you. When I tell them you won't sign they'll think you're cutting me dead. Be a sport now. You don't want to make me look cheap among my friends, do you?"

"I'm sorry," said Harry.

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"You're sorry you said you wouldn't sign? Well, that's better."

"No," said Harry; "I'm sorry it will hurt you among your friends. I've made up my mind not to join."

There was another moment of silence. Then Harry heard a telephone receiver snapped up as though the young man at the other end was very, very angry.

CHAPTER IV

TRICKERY

AT home that night Harry related the story of what had happened, keeping back only what Mr. MacMackin had said about his future. He thought it would sound like boasting if he told of that.

Mr. Dale listened to the tale with a smile on his face. "I thought you'd hear about it sooner or later," he said. "Mr. MacMackin isn't the kind to let a thing like that pass. And how about Billings? Have you heard from him?"

"Yes, sir," Harry answered. "He telephoned today. I told him that I wouldn't join."

"Did he seem put out?"

"Somewhat." Harry looked thoughtful.

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"I've been keeping out of his way of late, but I suppose I'll meet him sooner or later."

"Then why dodge?" his father asked. "You fear the meeting will be unpleasant?"

Harry nodded.

"Then meet him and get it over with. It has to come sooner or later."

As a result of this talk Harry went to work the following Monday morning resolved to go about as though he and Billings had never come together. He took dinner that day at Connie's, but Billings did not appear. Nor did Harry meet him in the streets of the manufacturing district. Thus several days passed, and then Billings again made use of the telephone.

"Hello, old man," he said genially. His resentment appeared to have vanished. "Busy?"

Harry had made one mistake of this kind and did not propose to make another.

"Pretty busy," he said.

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"Well, how about taking dinner with me? You can spare that much time."

"Not today," Harry answered. He was resolved to accept no more of Billings's hospitality.

"Tomorrow then."

"I'll be uptown tomorrow."

"How about Thursday?"

"Can't. Mr. MacMackin has some new goods coming in that day and is holding a salesmen's meeting."

"All right," said Billings. "I guess you don't want to eat with me. So long."

"Good-by," said Harry. He left the telephone with an air of satisfaction. He thought that Billings would not bother him with dinner invitations again.

He had told the truth about Thursday. A big shipment of goods was due from the Whitelake Mills. This was a new mill and its product was a new brand, Beveda cloth.

Thursday morning Tommy Lee, the porter,

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wheeled the first case of Beveda cloth into the department. The cloth was taken from its packing and set upon a table.

"Cut samples," Mr. MacMackin ordered the salesmen. "Study it. We'll get together about three o'clock."

Harry cut a sample. Some of the salesmen, veterans like Mr. Hecker, examined the cloth under a magnifying glass. They also tested it to see if the color was fast. Harry borrowed a glass and examined his piece. The cloth, he could see, was strongly woven. Mr. Claxton dug him in the ribs.

"Well, student," he asked, "got its pedigree?"

Harry smiled ruefully. "I guess I could examine it for hours and not learn much. I haven't progressed that far."

"Waste of time," Mr. Claxton said lightly. "Little Mac will tell us all we need know about the cloth." Little Mac was the department nickname for Mr. MacMackin, but no

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salesman was rash enough to use the name in his presence.

"But I'd like to find out for myself," Harry said. "This thing of depending on somebody else——"

Mr. Claxton chuckled. "There you go, preaching. Watch your Uncle Dudley. I'll sell as much of that cloth as the next man."

At three o'clock there was so much trade going on in the department that the meeting was put off until four. At that hour the salesmen gathered up front with the department head.

"This is our first big shipment from the Whitelake Mills," Mr. MacMackin said. "What do you think of the cloth?"

Harry kept silent and listened. He heard the older men give their ideas of the amount of wool, the amount of cotton, the strength of the weave, appearance and color.

"What would you say as to price?" Mr. MacMackin asked.



“ ‘Well, student,’ he asked, ‘got its pedigree?’ ”

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There were a dozen guesses. Finally the department head told them that the cloth could be sold for a nice profit for twenty-eight cents a yard.

Even Harry knew that twenty-eight cents a yard was a cheap figure. While the salesmen talked excitedly, he tried to think which of his customers would be interested in this bargain. Then he heard Mr. MacMackin explaining, and he brought back his wandering thoughts.

"This mill has succeeded in making its own dyes, which accounts for the cheapness of the product. I have taken two hundred cases. You need not fear to take orders for any quantity."

That afternoon Harry cut a generous piece of each color. Tomorrow he would start out to sell what he could.

On his way home that evening he met Billings. He thought that he would be the target for many reproaches, but Billings, instead, seemed to be in rare good humor.

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"Just as well you couldn't accept that invitation," he said. "I've been working pretty hard. We've got something good, and I've been pushing it hard."

"I thought you didn't work after early afternoon," Harry said.

"Oh, this is different," Billings answered calmly. "This is a killing. Next week I'll run down to one of the beaches and take things easy for awhile."

"That's the time to keep going," Harry observed, "when things are running right."

"Nix!" Billings waved his cane. "Give me my rest. I suppose you haven't changed your mind about the Daylight Club?"

"No."

"Well, everybody to his own taste, though I don't know where your taste lies. I guess you don't care for the society of gentlemen. Here's my car."

Billings boarded a trolley and rode away.

Harry was not displeased that the interview

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had taken place. Billings and the Daylight Club were now off his mind.

Early next morning he started forth to sell Beveda cloth. He had his day all mapped out, and was resolved that there would be no aimless hit-or-miss about his campaign. He knew just what firms he was going to visit.

At the first place a man raised his hands and laughingly pushed him away.

"Nothing doing, Dale. If I buy any more new stuff I'll be bankrupt."

"But you haven't seen this," Harry protested.

"Don't want to see it."

"But——"

"Come back next month. Give me a chance to get some orders on what I have."

"Next month?" Harry demanded. "You may not be able to get this next month."

The man was impressed. "Is it as good as that? I'll give you three minutes. Now, what is it?"

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Harry showed his samples.

"Well," he was asked, "how much?"

"Twenty-eight cents."

Half an hour later he departed with an order for three hundred yards.

At the second place, the manufacturer ordered one bolt for samples on Harry's promise that later orders would be filled.

So it went all morning. Almost every place he showed the goods he took an order. Some were fairly large, some were small, some were medium. When the noon whistles sounded, he had disposed of more than three hundred dollars' worth of Beveda cloth. He resolved to eat and then continue his work.

He walked to Connie's. He had learned that here was a restaurant that did not serve good food one day and inferior food another. He gave his order; and while the waiter was notifying the kitchen force, he looked over his list and arranged his afternoon route.

He would go to the Economy Skirt Com-

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pany, of which Burke & Snyder were the proprietors. Last winter he had brought them a bargain in blue cloth for girls' middy blouses. As a result they had reaped a financial harvest. Harry numbered them among his staunchest manufacturing friends.

"They're always willing to jump at a good thing," he reflected. "I shouldn't be surprised if they took a thousand yards of this."

The waiter brought his order. He laid his samples to one side of the table. Then he began to eat with the appetite of a young man who has been healthily busy all morning.

All at once he had an idea that Billings had entered the restaurant. He looked up. Prince, Henderson & Prince's sporty salesman was coming down the aisle formed by tables.

"Hello, Dale," he said. "Being good to your stomach? What are you eating? Is it all right?"

Harry said it was excellent.

"I guess I'll have that, but I want some

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oysters and soup with it. A gentleman should dine well. Mind if I sit here, Dale?"

"Not a bit."

Billings drew out a chair on the other side of the table. As he sat down he saw the samples.

"What's that?" he demanded.

"Beveda cloth," said Harry. "I guess we're the only firm in the city selling it now. It's the product of a new mill. All the cloth houses will be handling it after a while."

Billings was greatly interested. "So you're the only house in the city handling it, eh?"

"I imagine so."

"Why?"

"Because it's the product of a new mill. You know the game. A new mill tries to break in. It finds a mill agent, and the agent tries to induce wholesalers or jobbers to put it in stock, just the same as you and I try to sell our goods to manufacturers. A new mill

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has to buck the old mills, and a new cloth has to buck the cloths that have already found the market. That's the reason I think we're the only people handling it now. A new cloth doesn't often make a hit with two wholesalers in the same city at once. But your house and the rest of them will be handling it after a while."

"Will they?" Billings seemed amused. "Why?"

"It's a seller."

"Been getting orders with it, eh?"

"It sells almost on sight," Harry said earnestly.

Billings had finished his oysters. "I suppose you're making hay while the sun shines?" he asked.

Harry nodded. "I'll be working all afternoon."

Billings's eyes became thoughtful. "The Economy Skirt Company ought to jump at that."

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"That's how I feel about it," Harry told him.

"Going there this afternoon?"

"Yes."

Billings had almost finished his soup. He called the waiter.

"I guess this will be all. I'm not so hungry as I thought. Check, please." He took his hat and cane. "See you later, Dale."

"So long," said Harry. He stared after Billings with a puzzled frown on his face. Why had this leisurely young man gone off in such a hurry? It was not a bit like him.

However, there were other things to think of besides Billings. Harry once more went over his afternoon list. Some of his customers wanted their orders of Beveda cloth shipped that afternoon. He went to a telephone, called the cloth department, and dictated the orders to Dowd, one of the stock clerks of the cloth department.

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"Rush those, Dowd, will you?" he asked.

"I'll have them downstairs in half an hour," Dowd promised. "Doing much with that line?"

"It's going great," said Harry.

Nor was there any change that afternoon. Long before three o'clock Harry had placed four more orders. At the last place the manufacturer took but one minute after he saw the goods and heard the price.

"Future delivery?" he asked.

"Deliveries at once," Harry answered. "We have the goods in stock."

"I want a bolt this afternoon. Can I get it if I send down one of my men? I want to rush sample garments to my salesmen tomorrow night."

"You can," said Harry. He telephoned to Dowd to have the cloth ready.

"Bully boy," said Dowd. "Mr. Hecker just sold ten cases."

Harry whistled. Ten cases! Mackerel!

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Beveda cloth had surely hit the market hard.

At three o'clock he came to the Economy Skirt Company. Here he hoped to place his best order of the day. He would have come during the morning, but he knew from experience that here were two business men, Burke and Snyder, who liked to spend the morning getting the wheels of their plant running smoothly. The afternoon was the best time to see them to sell goods.

Mr. Snyder was out. Mr. Burke was busy. Harry sat down and waited.

Fifteen minutes later a clerk led him into the room where Mr. Burke always looked at samples. The senior partner came forward with outstretched hand.

"Hello, Dale. How's business?"

"Fine," Harry answered. "I have something here I want to show you, Mr. Burke."

"Something good?"

Harry handed the manufacturer his sam-

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ples. The man looked at them earnestly.

"Beveda cloth?" he asked.

Harry was surprised. "What do you know about Beveda cloth?"

"I've bought some."

Harry dropped into a chair. "You're not fooling me?"

"Not a bit of it, Dale. Why?"

"I thought I was coming in here with something new."

Mr. Burke shook his head. "No; I've already bought. I'm sorry, Dale. If you had come around earlier——"

"What house sold you?" Harry interrupted.

"Prince, Henderson & Prince."

"What salesman?"

"A young fellow named Billings."

Harry stiffened. So that was the reason why Billings had left so hurriedly. Then the thought came to him that perhaps he was doing Billings an injustice. Perhaps Billings had made the sale several days ago.

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"Mr. Burke," Harry said, "do you mind telling me when you placed your order?"

"Not more than an hour ago. Why?"

"Oh, nothing." Harry tried to smile and failed. "I guess I got here an hour late."

CHAPTER V

THOUGHTS OF REVENGE

WHEN Harry, after leaving the Economy Skirt Company, came down to the street, he stood there for a long time with his samples on his arm. His blood ran hot with anger. He felt all the wild impulses of a young man who has been shamefully tricked.

He remembered what Billings had told him the night they had met, that he was making a killing and was working hard. Billings had been making his killing with this same Beveda cloth. The Whitelake Mills had succeeded in getting their product not only into the A. R. Sheppard Company, but also into the wholesale cloth house of Prince, Henderson & Prince.

His mind went back to the scene in the

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restaurant. Billings had spied his samples. He recalled that Billings had shown surprise. And then Billings had asked questions, and he—— What had he done?

“I answered him like a simple-minded fool,” Harry thought bitterly. “He knew I sell quite a bit to the Economy Skirt Company. He asked me was I going there. I told him I was. Then he cleared out. I’ll bet he went to Burke as soon as he left the restaurant.”

And at that thought Harry’s blood boiled all the hotter. Billings had used him for a good thing. He had been tricked, and cheated, and made into a laughing stock. Probably Billings would go to the Daylight Club and tell the happening as a great joke, a fine adventure.

Harry did not care two pins what the members of the Daylight Club might think of him. But he did have all a young man’s distaste for ridicule. The thought that Billings might

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boast of having tricked him did not make him any calmer.

"I'll get square," he vowed. "I'll put something over on him if it takes me a year."

He had a mind to go back to the store. That, though, would seem like quitting. He tried to work. But his attempt at salesmanship at the next place was so weak and wobbly, that he quit in disgust. Going at the job the way he felt at present was simply spoiling a good thing. He walked back to the store.

There he made out his shipping tickets, and on the back of each ticket he recorded the order. Mr. Hecker came over to his desk.

"Been pushing Beveda cloth?" he asked.

Harry held up his stock of orders.

Mr. Hecker smiled. "That's the way to go at it. Strike while the iron is hot."

"We're not the only firm handling Beveda," Harry said.

"No?" Mr. Hecker was surprised. "Who else has it?"

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"Prince, Henderson & Prince."

"How do you know?"

Harry hesitated. "One of their salesmen beat me to the Economy Skirt Company," he said. He did not care to explain how he had been fooled.

Mr. Hecker went off to Mr. MacMackin's office. Presently he came back to Harry's desk.

"You don't know what price they're asking, do you?"

"No, sir."

"This is rather serious," Mr. Hecker explained. "We took those goods thinking we'd have the trade to ourselves. Of course, the mill has the right to sell where it can. But we wouldn't have bought so heavily had we feared competition. We'll have to find what price Prince, Henderson & Prince are asking."

"I imagine," Harry said slowly, "they're asking twenty-eight, the same as we are. Be-

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fore I came away from the Economy plant, Mr. Burke asked me our price. I told him. If Prince, Henderson & Prince were selling cheaper he would probably have told me we were too high. If we were cheaper he would have canceled and given the order to me. Instead, he merely said that he was sorry I hadn't got there first."

"I think you're right," Mr. Hecker nodded. "Well, we'll find out anyway."

Half an hour later Mr. Hecker was back again.

"Twenty-eight is right," he said.

Before closing time Mr. MacMackin came to the salesmen's desks.

"Push Beveda hard," he ordered. "We're loaded up with two hundred cases, and Prince, Henderson & Prince also have the cloth. Watch their prices. If they cut, we'll have to cut, too."

After Mr. MacMackin had gone, Mr. Claxton nudged Harry.

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"Cross your fingers and hope the price will come down to twenty-six cents," he said.

"Why?"

"Because it will be easier to sell at twenty-six."

"But the department won't be making its profit."

"Fiddlesticks," said Mr. Claxton. "I'm thinking about my commissions. I'll be able to sell more of that stuff at twenty-six than I can at twenty-eight."

Harry was sure that Mr. Claxton did not have the right idea. Their interests as salesmen were all tied up with the cloth department. If the department prospered, they prospered in turn.

When Harry started for home, the thought of his lost sale at the Economy Skirt Company still rankled. After supper he told his parents what had happened.

"Oh!" cried Mrs. Dale. "Isn't that young man a villain!"

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"He is a young man of weak morals," said Mr. Dale. "But I think that Harry is largely to blame."

"How?" Mrs. Dale demanded.

"He talked too much. It is a habit that gets very many young men into trouble."

Harry nodded. "I felt that way myself."

"Mind," Mr. Dale cautioned, "I do not advocate secrecy and stealth. I believe in a man being out in the open. But at the same time I do not believe in him carrying his business on his sleeve. Harry knew that Billings sells cloth. Yet he told Billings his business in a very reckless way."

Harry nodded, but said nothing.

"Take my business, for instance," Mr. Dale went on. "If I find a prospect, a man who may take insurance, I do not go around telling every insurance man I meet that Mr. So-and-so is interested in insurance. If I did that, they would all call on him and I might lose, just as Harry lost. But neither do I

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sneak around to see him, nor do I say harsh or mean things about any other insurance man. I play the game fair and square; I try to take advantage of no one. At the same time I do not throw open the door so that any person may take advantage of me."

Harry stared moodily at the floor. "Billings needs a taking down," he said.

"Just what do you mean by that?" his father asked.

"I mean that I'd like to get square."

"Revenge; is that what you're thinking of?"

Harry flushed. "He needs a lesson," he muttered.

"I'm afraid you need a lesson, too," Mr. Dale said quietly. "This thing of getting square is the cheapest feeling to which a man or a boy can give way. It spoils a person's days and makes him unhappy. And the time that he gives to thinking about revenge could be better spent thinking about his business. Can't you see that?"

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Harry was silent.

"There is something mean about plotting to get square," Mr. Dale went on. "Take my advice. Dig in and do your work. Forget Billings. What's past is past. Anyway, you have been taught a lesson. You have learned that hereafter you must learn to control your tongue. To that extent the affair with Billings has done you good."

"But the thought of his tricking me——"

"Forget it," said Mr. Dale. "He can't trick you again, can he?"

"I hope not."

"Then forget it. You cannot afford to waste time thinking about Billings."

Harry went to bed not at all sure that he wanted to forget it. However, a night's sleep chased much of his resentment. He went to work that day resolved to push Beveda cloth as hard as he could.

He had another good day, even though he found that several of his customers had al-

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ready purchased the cloth from Prince, Henderson & Prince. At noon he had dinner at Connie's. Billings did not appear.

Thus several days passed. Billings seemed to have dropped completely from sight, and Harry had an idea that he might have made good his boast and have gone off to the seashore.

By this time Harry's resentment had practically passed away. He met Arnold Keith on the street, and Keith gave him a smile that said, "Oh! but you're easy." Harry, however, did not lose his temper. He had made up his mind to pay no attention to what any member of the Daylight Club might think of him. Keith's smile, though, proved that Billings had told the story as a good joke.

By this time it was apparent that Beveda cloth was a success. Every department salesman had done a fair share of business. Even Mr. Claxton, for all his wishing that the price would drop, had made some large sales.

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"The trouble is," he confided to Harry, "that the mills will probably jack up the price when they find they have the market. Then sales will probably drop."

Harry told this to Mr. Hecker. The veteran salesman smiled.

"Did it ever strike you that Mr. MacMackin knew his business?" he asked.

Harry's face grew red.

"Come!" said Mr. Hecker. "I'm not chiding you nor finding fault. But when we put in this cloth we took two hundred cases. That was a pretty stiff order to hand to a new mill on a new brand. But Mr. MacMackin had faith in the goods and in the price. One reason why he took two hundred cases was this: he has the privilege of buying five hundred more at the same price."

"Oh!" Harry looked thoughtful. "I wonder if Prince, Henderson & Prince have that kind of agreement with the mill."

"Probably not," Mr. Hecker told him. "I

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don't suppose they took more than fifty cases at most."

"Well, then," said Harry, "sooner or later we ought to have the local market to ourselves."

"Sooner or later," Mr. Hecker smiled, "we ought to be able to undersell them all one cent a yard and still take our profit."

Harry went back to his desk with a vast respect for the head of his department. Mr. MacMackin had had faith in his judgment. He had had the courage to buy heavily when the price was low. And he had looked far enough ahead to guard the future.

"Seen anything of Billings?" Mr. Dale asked one night.

Harry said he had not.

"Still thinking of getting square?"

"No—not now."

"Good! It isn't getting square that counts, it's being square."

However, Harry knew that sooner or later

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he would see Billings. They met, next day, at Connie's.

When Harry reached the restaurant, Billings was eating.

"Hello, Dale," he called. "Here's a seat."

Harry walked past the table. He found a place farther from the door. He gave his order and had scarcely started to eat when Billings arose and sauntered toward him.

"What's the matter, Dale?"

"Nothing much," Harry answered calmly.

"You cut me a minute ago."

"Did I?" Harry calmly broke off a piece of bread and buttered it.

"You did." Billings was losing his air of ease. "What's wrong?"

"I don't like tricksters," said Harry.

"Sore, eh?" Billings demanded. "About that Economy Skirt deal?"

Harry did not take the trouble to answer.

"Now look here." Billings sat down. "Have some sense. I was selling that line and

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you were selling it. You told me you were going to a place that I intended to visit that afternoon. What a fool I would have been to have let you beat me to it."

"You tricked me," said Harry. "You knew I thought I had an exclusive on Beveda."

"I didn't give you that thought, did I?"

"No; but you didn't take the trouble to tell me the truth."

"I didn't tell you anything."

"That's true. You pumped me——"

"And like a little fool," said Billings, "you told me all I wanted to know. You can't blame me if you haven't brains enough." He lighted a cigarette with an air of having said the final word.

Harry became angry. "I'm not going to argue with you," he said rapidly. "It was trickery——"

"It was salesmanship," Billings interrupted. "It isn't hustle that wins. It's brains. I had the brains and you hadn't. You opened your

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mouth and talked like a chump; I kept quiet and did the business."

His manner was so superior and so insolent that Harry's old resentment came back.

"It was trickery," he said. "It was sharp practice. You can call it what you will, but it wasn't square. It was a dirty trick. I don't want to have any more to do with you. And as I want to eat my dinner in peace, I must ask you to leave this table."

By this time Billings was angry, too. "You're a little squirt," he said, "and you'll never make a salesman in a thousand years. It's a good thing I didn't put up your name at the club. The fellows would have black-balled you so hard it would have been a disgrace. And I'll tell you another thing. I'm after the Economy people, and I'll have all their cloth trade before I'm through."

The quarrel rekindled all Harry's desire to get square. If Billings had tried to explain, or had tried to smooth things over, matters would

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not have been so bad. But Billings had adopted an air of superiority and had rubbed the raw spot. And now that the raw spot was aching again, Harry's old thoughts returned.

The threat to take the cloth trade of the Economy Skirt Company had also hit him hard. He suspected that Billings would go out of his way to do business there. And as the Economy was Harry's best account, this was striking at him where it hurt. Competition in the ordinary course of business was to be expected. He rather looked for it. But having a rival trying to undermine you just out of ill-will was another thing entirely.

Harry quite forgot that he was looking for a way by which he could undermine Billings.

That afternoon, while he sat at his desk, checking up his trade, Mr. Claxton leaned closer.

"I saw a friend of yours today, Dale."

"A friend of mine?" Harry asked.

"Yes, Billings. He was telling me about

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that Beveda cloth deal. What are you going to do about it?"

So Billings was now openly boasting. Harry's face hardened.

"I'm going to get back at him," he said grimly. "I'm going to make him wish he had let me alone."

"Good boy." Mr. Claxton patted his shoulder. "That's the only way to teach a fellow like Billings."

Harry thought so, too. His father's advice was forgotten. He would find a way to turn a trick that would silence Billings's boasting tongue.

CHAPTER VI

SQUARENESS PAYS

HARRY did not tell his father about his changed resolution. At first he had thought that he would relate what had happened at the restaurant. He decided, however, to keep silent. His father would question him, and sooner or later he would blurt out what he intended to do. His nature was so clean that he had never been able to practice deceit.

He did not doubt the logic of much of what his father had said. It was best to throw aside thoughts of revenge. It was best not to waste time on petty thoughts of getting square. But he reasoned that this logic applied only to the every-day run of men. Billings was not an every-day type. Billings was a fellow who

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would have to be taught, and the only way to teach him would be by the use of his own weapons. If he was outgeneraled and fooled, he might take a lesson to heart. In no other way, Harry thought, could he be impressed.

"If I get one good chance at him," the boy reflected, "I'll make him sit up with a jump. Then he won't be so anxious to turn a smart trick the next time."

So Harry kept a sharp lookout for a chance to put grease on Billings's path. But the days passed and no way of upsetting the salesman from Prince, Henderson & Prince occurred to him. He began to suspect that there might never come a chance for him to—"to what?" said his conscience. To get square, said his thoughts. Harry flushed. So it wasn't merely to teach Billings a lesson that he was keeping a sharp lookout. It was for the mean little purpose of getting square.

"He deserves it," Harry told himself recklessly, nor would he listen when unseen voices

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tried to whisper in his ears the advice his father had given.

Meanwhile, Beveda cloth continued to sell. The whole market had awakened to the fact that here was a good fabric. Manufacturers who had ordered a few yards for samples, were now ordering by the bolt. The Economy Skirt Company had done well with the cloth. Once Harry went there and found the receiving clerk signing for two cases of the cloth from Prince, Henderson & Prince. His blood boiled at the thought that but for trickery these orders would be his. How many cases the skirt company would buy in the future he could not guess.

It was but natural that he and Billings should meet. Several times they encountered each other at Connie's, but they did not speak. Another of their meetings was in the sample room of the Economy Skirt Company. Harry came in while Billings was showing his wares.

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"Hello, Dale!" called Mr. Burke, the senior partner. "You know Billings, don't you?"

Harry said he did. An air of restraint was noticeable at once. Mr. Burke shifted the conversation to other topics. After Billings had departed Harry showed what samples he had brought.

"Rather clever fellow, Billings," said Mr. Burke.

Harry agreed that he was.

"Pretty reliable chap, too."

Harry, pretending to be busy with his samples, made believe that he had not heard. Mr. Burke pursed his lips thoughtfully.

"Snyder," he said to his partner that night, "keep your eye on Billings of Prince, Henderson & Prince. I want to get a line on him. Sound him out. Get him talking about himself."

"What's wrong?" Mr. Snyder asked.

"Probably nothing. He and Dale met this

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afternoon. There's bad blood between them. When I remarked that Billings was reliable, Dale had nothing to say. Pretended he hadn't heard me. Now, you and I know that Dale is square, so we'll keep our eyes on Billings."

"All right," said Mr. Snyder. "If he's playing 'possum he'll spill the beans sooner or later."

Harry, knowing nothing of this conversation, went on his way nursing thoughts of bitterness.

About this time a shabby, seedy-looking man came into the cloth department and asked for Mr. Hecker. The salesman and his visitor walked off into an aisle. After the man was gone, Mr. Hecker and Harry found themselves in the broadcloth stock with a few idle moments on their hands.

"Did you see the man who came in for me a little while ago?" Mr. Hecker asked.

"Yes, sir," Harry answered.

"Would you believe that only a few years

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ago he was well-to-do and had a prosperous business?"

"That man?" Harry asked. It seemed that Mr. Hecker must be joking, for the visitor had looked as though the cares of the world had beaten him to the ground.

"That man," said Mr. Hecker. "He was in business with a partner. They were doing well. But he and his partner could not get along. They were continually quarreling. Finally the man who came here today decided on a dissolution of the partnership.

"The firm dissolved. But the partner was tricky and without honor. By sharp practice he secured the best of the bargain. When the firm was split, this man found that he had been hoodwinked. It rankled. He vowed that he would make things hot for the man who had swindled him.

"That was his mistake. All of us at some time or other are cheated or defrauded. It does us no good to nurse a grudge. Rather,

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we ought to prepare ourselves not to be caught napping again. But this man was not satisfied to charge the matter up to experience. He vowed he would drive his former partner out of business.

"You see, they had each opened a separate establishment in the same city. There was plenty of business for each. But this man was not content with that. He was not content to build up his trade and go ahead. He wanted his partner to go down.

"That became his one thought. It was with him at all times. He followed his former partner's advertising. He kept track of what wares his former partner displayed. When a salesman came to him with samples, he did not think what he could buy that would sell easiest in the market of his town. He always thought of what he could buy along the line of what his former partner had. He always wanted to undersell the man who had gotten the best of him.

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“What was the result? He did business, but it was a ruinous business. And the tricky partner was too tricky for him again. The partner said to himself, ‘He will go to the wall. I will let him set the pace. I will not cut prices as he does. And when he is through and his credit gone, I will step in and take all the trade.’

“Two years passed. Then the man who came here today found himself against the wall, and he awoke to the harm he was doing himself. He tried to get back on his feet. He put up his prices and tried to make the profit a business must make if it is to live. But now his former partner came in with cut prices. From doing a lot of business at a loss, my visitor of today did no business at all. Three months later his creditors closed him out.”

There was an interval of silence.

“Do you know why he came to me today?”
Mr. Hecker asked.

“No, sir.”

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"He asked for the loan of fifty cents."

Harry shook his head. What a pity things had gone so completely to smash.

"I think your visitor was a very foolish man," he said.

"Any man is foolish," Mr. Hecker nodded, "who wastes time thinking of revenge. If a man were to injure me in a business deal, I shouldn't waste time thinking about what he had done, but I would dig in and sell goods. No person can think of two things at once. If he's thinking of revenge he can't think of business. He lowers his efficiency."

Harry's eyes were turned away. It had suddenly dawned on him that perhaps Mr. Hecker was telling him all this for a purpose. He looked up into the man's face.

"Is this a sermon?" he asked.

Mr. Hecker gave the faintest smile. "That all depends."

"On what, sir?"

"On whether what Mr. Claxton says is so."

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Harry's eyes turned away again. "Did Mr. Claxton say something about Billings and a deal in Beveda cloth?"

"He did," answered Mr. Hecker. His hand dropped to the boy's shoulder. "Forget it, Harry. It doesn't pay." Then one of his customers came into the department and he hurried away.

That talk made a deep impression on Harry. One moment he'd make up his mind to forget all about Billings. The next moment he'd think how Billings had called him a fool in the restaurant and his anger would come to the surface. But all the time he tried to fight down the hot impulses that stirred him.

Twice, during the next two days, he met Arnold Keith, Billings's friend of the Daylight Club. Each time Keith gave him that same superior sort of smile. Harry tried hard to smother a feeling that he would like to punch Keith in the eye.

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He had intended saying nothing to his father about having still desired to get square with Billings. But that night, as they sat together in the little library at home, he blurted out his story of how he had met Billings in the restaurant, of how Billings had flayed him, of how Keith gave him that tantalizing smile, and of what Mr. Hecker had said. He thought that his father would scold him for not having stopped thinking of revenge. Instead, Mr. Dale said patiently:

"Young men refuse to heed anything but experience. Until you find out for yourself, Harry, you will continue to let thoughts of Billings bother you. It's a month, now, since that happened, is it not?"

"Yes, sir."

"Has anybody fooled you during that time?"

"No, sir."

"Your sales have been going ahead steadily, have they not?"

"Yes, sir."

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"Then why fret about something that is past? Don't you see how useless it is?"

"I'm beginning to now," said Harry.

His father smiled. "Then I guess your trouble is about over. And Harry, always remember this: in the long run, only squareness pays."

Harry carried that thought to bed with him. That night he dreamed that Billings was head of the cloth department and that he had been put back in the broadcloth stock for having done something that was wrong.

The busy season began to come on, and Harry soon had so much business to think about that there was no room for thoughts of anything else. He threw himself eagerly into his work. During the following week he opened three new accounts. Two of them were accepted by the credit department, but the third was declined. Mr. Hecker took occasion to give him a few words of good counsel.

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"You knew the history of that firm, didn't you, Harry?"

"I knew they had been in trouble two or three times," Harry answered.

"Then that was your signal to steer clear of them. There is too much good trade in the market to bother with the doubtful propositions. Besides, that class of trade always gives you trouble. Goods are sent back, bills are disputed, damage claims are made. And often, just when you think you have landed a good order, the credit department refuses to pass the sale. It doesn't pay, Dale, my boy."

"I guess you're right," Harry answered. "I'll steer clear of that in the future."

"A good plan," Mr. Hecker approved. "The trade of a hundred good firms is worth more to a salesman than the trade of one hundred and fifty firms, fifty of which are not trustworthy. Besides, selling to that class of trade gives a salesman a bad name, and the

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credit department begins to watch every account he handles. Remember, we're not working altogether for commissions. We're working for the A. R. Sheppard Company."

That afternoon Harry called at the Economy Skirt Company. Billings was there, and Harry soon left. When he returned to the cloth department, just before closing time, he was told that the Economy Skirt Company wanted him at once.

He called them on the telephone. "Mr. Burke, please," he said.

After a moment he heard a crisp voice: "Hello."

"Mr. Burke?" Harry asked.

"Yes."

"This is Dale."

"Oh! I've been trying to get you for an hour. How are you selling Beveda cloth?"

"Same price—twenty-eight cents."

"Can you make immediate delivery?"

"Yes, sir."

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"Good. Send me five hundred red, five hundred navy blue. One thousand yards—Rush it. Good-by."

"Thank you," said Harry. "Good-by."

He came away from the telephone in a daze. The Economy Skirt Company had been buying Beveda cloth from Prince, Henderson & Prince. Why had they shifted? Had the other firm raised the price?

Harry reported the transaction to Mr. MacMackin. Next morning the department head told him that Prince, Henderson & Prince were still selling the cloth at twenty-eight cents.

Harry shook his head helplessly. Why had the order come to him? Of course, he had once done the skirt company a good turn. But Mr. Burke was not the man to shift from a salesman who had introduced him to a fabric merely because he might like another salesman better. Harry knew that he would always have a slight advantage with the skirt com-

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pany proprietors, but he also knew he would have to get there first to get it.

Along toward noon he walked into the skirt company's sample room.

"I'm puzzled," he said.

Mr. Burke gave him a quizzical smile. "About that order for one thousand yards of Beveda cloth?"

"Yes, sir."

Mr. Burke drummed with his fingers on a sample table. "I'll tell you something, Dale," he said. "When Billings came in here with that cloth he told us they had exclusive territory. An hour later you appeared with the same cloth. You didn't say much, but you were mighty anxious to know which of Prince, Henderson & Prince's men had sold us. That made me suspicious."

Harry nodded.

"Then you and Billings met in here. I could see you were not friendly. That made me do a little more thinking."

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Harry said nothing.

"Yesterday," Mr. Burke went on, "Billings came in here again. He was a bit talkative. Your name came up, and he said you were slow. I asked him how, and he said he'd tell me a big joke. He told me about meeting you in a restaurant, and of finding you were coming here with Beveda cloth, and of running around here and beating you to it. 'Look here,' I said, 'you knew Dale was selling Beveda cloth, didn't you?' 'Sure,' he acknowledged. 'Then why did you tell us you were the only firm in the city selling it?' Billings laughed and tried to pass it off. I said I wouldn't place an order with him just then. He left. Then I telephoned to you."

Harry's face had become thoughtful.

"We have salesmen of our own on the road," Mr. Burke said. "I wouldn't want one of my men to be tricked that way, nor would I like to hear that one of my men had tricked a competitor. We believe in clean tactics. When

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we find a man who doesn't play the game that way, we cut away from him. If he slips something over on another salesman, tomorrow he might try to slip something over on us. That's why you got the order, Dale."

Ten minutes later Harry found himself out in the street. He was thankful that he had found no way of evening things with Billings. For now he knew that what his father and Mr. Hecker said was true. Square dealing paid.

CHAPTER VII

SLANDER

WHEN Harry returned to the cloth department that afternoon Mr. Hecker was not busy. The boy told him the story of what had happened at the skirt company.

"Squareness pays," said the salesman. "Aren't you glad that you didn't turn any mean tricks?"

Harry said he was.

"Reputation," Mr. Hecker went on, "is the big thing in business. Every man has a reputation of some kind, good, bad or indifferent. It's up to him at all times just what his reputation shall be. Yours must be pretty good else Mr. Burke would not have turned the order your way. See to it that you keep it good."

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"I'll try to," said Harry.

"And as for Billings," Mr. Hecker went on, "he'll keep up his tricky work, and it will get him into more trouble before he is through."

"I hope not," said Harry. "I'd rather he played the game fair."

Mr. Hecker gave him a shrewd glance. "I thought you didn't like Billings."

"I don't," said Harry. "He isn't to be trusted, and I want nothing to do with him. But I wish him well. I hold no hard feelings—now."

That night, at supper, Harry told of his experiences of the day.

"Think your old father knows something now?" Mr. Dale asked.

"I never doubted your advice," Harry answered. "I guess I must have had a mean streak and just wanted to get back at Billings."

Mrs. Dale smiled fondly at her son. "Mr.

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Burke must like you to turn the order over to you," she said.

"It's more than like," said Mr. Dale. "It's respect. Harry has attended to business. He's been open and aboveboard. He's winning a reputation as a clean young fellow."

"That's what Mr. Hecker said," Harry broke in.

"What?" his father asked.

"'Reputation.' Mr. Hecker told me mine is pretty good, and to see to it that I kept it that way."

"Mr. Hecker must be a fine type of man," Mrs. Dale observed.

"He is, mother," Harry answered. "He has given me a lot of good advice."

"What he said about reputation is true," Mr. Dale nodded. "Did you ever throw a pebble in water and see the little circle of waves grow wider and wider? That's how it is with reputation. At first one man says you're square, then another says it, then an-

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other. Soon all your business acquaintances are saying it. That's your reputation. It spreads, and spreads, and spreads. If bad things are said of you, they spread just the same."

"Providing——" Harry began.

"Ah, yes," Mr. Dale answered. "Providing they are true, and providing the men who spread the bad tidings are to be believed."

Harry had an idea that sooner or later Billings would learn that he had lost the Economy Skirt Company's trade. He was sure, too, that Billings would at once try to stir up trouble. However, he did not worry about what the future might hold for him. If Billings wanted to be nasty, why that was up to Billings. Personally Harry had no fear.

Two days later Billings got him on the telephone. "I want to know what you're trying to do," he demanded.

"About what?" Harry asked.

"You know what. About the Economy

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Skirt Company. What stories did you tell them about me?"

"None."

"I don't believe you. You went there sneaking and whining and you got my trade. I won't stand for it. You hear me? I——"

Harry hung up the receiver. He saw no reason to continue a discussion that could only lead to angry words. When he had lost out at the Economy Skirt Company, Billings had thought it a joke. Now, apparently, the boot was on the other foot and pinching badly.

Besides, he was busy that day and had no time to listen to a flood of abuse. He had hit upon a new idea, new to him, at any rate, and was busy carrying it out. He had explained it to Mr. Hecker and Mr. Claxton.

"It's this way," he said. "A letter comes in from a customer ordering goods. You fill the order. He gets the material in from twenty-four to thirty-six hours if he's in the city. If he's out of town, it takes longer."

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"Now, my idea is this: As soon as an order is filled, drop that customer a note telling him that his order has been taken care of, telling him how many yards have been shipped and the price. He knows just what's coming to him long before the delivery wagon arrives. He knows the price. In that way disputes are avoided."

"What good does it do him to know at two o'clock that his goods are on the way if he'll get them at six o'clock, anyway?" Mr. Hecker asked.

"Lots of times it won't do him any good," Harry answered. "Then comes a time when he's anxious to know, and the letter's there. Suppose I receive a letter at four o'clock in the afternoon saying that a customer wants a bolt of Beveda cloth. I fill the order, send it to the entry department, and drop him a line. When he reaches his shop in the morning there is my letter telling him his stuff is on the way. What does he think about it?"

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"He thinks that you're a bright and up-to-the minute salesman," Mr. Hecker said with a smile.

Harry blushed. "I'm serious, Mr. Hecker."

"So am I," said the man. "It's a good play. It makes a customer feel that we're interested in him."

So, having had Mr. Hecker's approval, Harry was now busy writing six letters to customers whose orders had come in that afternoon.

Mr. Claxton had not been impressed by Harry's idea. He came over and picked up one of the letters.

"Cæsar!" he chuckled. "What have we here, Harry? This customer has ordered only six yards?"

"Yes, sir. It's a new firm. Not much money."

"And you waste time dropping them a letter on such an order?"

"Why not?" Harry asked. "They may have

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a ten-thousand-dollar line of credit five years from now."

"Oh, you dreamer!" Mr. Claxton teased. "Your idea is all right, Harry. I'll write a letter myself if the order is big enough. But on a six-yard cut—— Good night!"

Mr. Claxton told the story all over the department. Finally the tale reached Mr. MacMackin. He came to Harry's desk.

"Did you write a letter to a customer who ordered six yards of cloth?"

"Yes, sir."

"Have you mailed it?"

"No, sir."

"May I have it? Just for half-an-hour?"

Harry surrendered his letter. What could Mr. MacMackin want with it? Would the department head read him a lecture about wasting time on little things?

Mr. MacMackin walked away with the note. Twenty minutes later he came back with it.

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"Thank you, Dale," he said. That was all.

Harry could not make head nor tail of what Mr. MacMackin's interest in the letter could be. However, as Mr. MacMackin had not chided him, there couldn't be anything of which the department head disapproved. He forgot the matter for the moment in the press of his work.

Toward closing time Mr. Claxton met him in one of the department aisles.

"Don't go murdering me, Dale," the salesman pleaded. "I didn't think it would get you into trouble."

"That what would get me into trouble?" Harry asked.

"Telling about that letter—that six-yard letter. I didn't think Little Mac would take it up."

"Oh!" Harry spoke quickly. "Do you know why he took the letter?"

Mr. Claxton gave him a blank look. "Do I know why? Don't you? Didn't he blow you

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up about wasting time on so small a matter?"

Harry shook his head.

"He didn't? What did he say?"

"He asked me could he take the letter. He brought it back and said 'Thank you.' "

Mr. Claxton whistled. "That beats me. I thought he'd blow you higher than a kite when I saw him go to your desk. I'm glad he didn't." The salesman chuckled. "Maybe he's entered that letter for the A. R. Sheppard Prize."

"You're fooling me," said Harry.

The A. R. Sheppard Prize was a Christmas gift of one hundred dollars to the man or boy who originated the best plan each year in the interests of the House. A department head who thought one of his men had done something noteworthy, always brought the matter to the attention of the firm. It was an honor to win the prize—an honor to the individual, an honor to the department in which he worked.

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Harry went back to his desk smiling broadly. He knew that Mr. Claxton had been poking fun at him. Not for a moment did he think that his little letter would create comment.

But several days later he came to the store to find himself famous. Every salesman had been given a circular direct from the office of Mr. Sheppard. Across the top ran a line:

WHAT HAVE YOU INVESTED IN GOOD
WILL?

And under it this line:

HERE IS A LETTER SENT OUT BY ONE OF
OUR MEN

After that came a perfect copy of the letter that Harry had written acknowledging the receipt of the order for six yards of cloth. Even his signature was there. And under this was another line:

DO YOU WRITE YOUR TRADE?

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Harry felt a flood of embarrassment. He wished the letter had not been used. It made him conspicuous, and he preferred to stay in the background. Mr. Claxton came over to his desk and tapped him on the shoulder.

"Ho!" he chuckled. "What did I say about the A. R. Sheppard Prize?"

"You're fooling again," Harry protested.

"I was a few days ago," Mr. Claxton admitted, "but I'm serious now."

"Well," Harry answered, "I'm not. Anybody can write a little 'Thank you' letter."

"Does everybody, though?" Mr. Claxton asked. "I tell you, young fellow, you've given me something to think about."

For all that, Harry refused to take talk of the Sheppard Prize seriously. It was a long, long way to Christmas. What interested him most was how a facsimile of his letter came to be on that circular.

Mr. Hecker told him. "Mr. MacMackin took it upstairs and had it photographed," he

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said. "There's a mighty good idea behind that letter. I admit I've been asleep, too. Suppose we all wrote letters like that. Take a man out West who writes me to ship him something by fast freight. Perhaps its seven or eight days before the goods arrive. But if he gets a letter from me within two days, he knows that his order has been received and has been taken care of. If we all kept in touch with our trade that way, the House of Sheppard would have a reputation from the Atlantic to the Pacific."

"Good!" said Harry. "That would mean business and every salesman would get his share of it."

Mr. Hecker smiled quietly. Here was a boy who never said "I," "my" or "me." It was always "us," or "we" or "the salesmen."

Later, as Harry started out with some samples under his arm, Mr. MacMackin stopped him.

"Dale," he said crisply, "I'm glad to see yo

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are still working with your head. Keep it up. That's what wins."

Harry canvassed his trade that morning feeling that this was indeed one good old world. At noon he went to Connie's for dinner. There, for the first time in weeks, he came face to face with Billings.

Billings looked as though he had not had enough sleep the night before. He was in rather an ugly mood, and he wanted to bring up the question of the Economy Skirt Company. Harry, however, would have none of him. Billings began to raise his voice, and other diners began to look their way.

"If you don't go away from me," Harry said quietly, "I'll ask one of the waiters to take you away."

"*You* couldn't do it," Billings blustered.

Harry did not answer. Billings prepared to depart. "I'll queer you all over this district," he threatened.

Just what Billings would do Harry did not

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know, nor did he care. He ate his dinner and went his way. For several days he forgot that such a person as Billings lived. Then Mr. Claxton motioned to him as he came in late one afternoon with a batch of orders to get out.

"Billings is talking about you," said the salesman.

"Is he?" Harry threw his order book on his desk. "What does he say?"

"He's circulating stories that you can't be trusted and that you sell goods by dirty methods."

Harry's blood grew hot. His reputation would be tarnished, his prospects would be darkened. Then came a thought of something his father had said. What was it? Oh, yes; provided the men who spread bad tidings are men whose word can be accepted. Would Billings's word be accepted? Would it be accepted by Mr. Burke and by others who knew him?

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Harry sat down at his desk and reached calmly for his order book. "I guess we needn't pay much attention to Billings," he said.

Mr. Hecker, had he heard that, would have been proud of him.

CHAPTER VIII

KEITH BARS THE WAY

HARRY said nothing at home about the tactics that Billings had adopted. He knew that his mother would worry needlessly. Besides, he felt that here was a situation in which he was able to take care of himself.

During the next two weeks he watched his trade closely, but nowhere did he find any evidence that Billings's campaign of slander was bearing fruit. Then he walked into the small manufacturing plant of Isaac Blum, a manufacturer of odd lots who was always looking for a bargain. Mr. Blum was a big, massive man. He had little book learning, but he owned a vast stock of homely shrewdness.

"This Mr. Billings," he said to Harry. "You know him?"

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"Oh, yes."

"A big talker, no? Keep a watch on the big talker, I say. No? And if he speak bad of other people—— Watch him, I say. No?"

Harry could read between the lines. Billings had told some sort of tale to Mr. Blum, but the manufacturer had not believed it. So Harry went his way feeling more secure than before. Here was his first definite indication that nasty tales would not hurt him.

He occasionally met Billings. One of their encounters came at Connie's. Billings and Arnold Keith were eating at a table as Harry passed. Keith gave him an insolent stare.

"I'd have taken him out in the street and whipped him," Keith said.

"A gentleman cannot mix in street brawls," Billings answered in a tired sort of voice.

"Of course not," Keith agreed. "But something should be done to put a beggar in his place."

Several months ago Harry would have fired

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up angrily. Now he laughed quietly as he sat at his table. Gentlemen, indeed! Mr. Hecker was a gentleman and so was Mr. MacMackin, and they were far from being of Billings's stripe.

When Harry left the restaurant, Keith and Billings were still at table. This time, however, no remarks were passed.

Not long afterwards, Harry came into the department to find that Mr. MacMackin had called a conference for that evening. As soon as the department was clear of customers, Mr. MacMackin called the salesmen around him.

"The Whitelake Mills," he said, "are the makers of Beveda cloth. That much you all know. As you know, too, this cloth sells at a reasonable figure. With the coming of the war and the stopping of German commerce, this country experienced a serious shortage of dyes. The prices of dyes went up, and the prices of dyed cloth also went skyward. The

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Whitelake Mills began to experiment with formulas, and they finally produced their own dyes. Thanks to this discovery, they were able to put Beveda cloth on the market and sell it cheaply.

“But it took them quite a while to make a perfect dye. Thousands of yards of cloth were spoiled. The dye was not consistent. The color did not run evenly. The mills have thousands of yards of this spoiled cloth on their hands.

“It is not altogether bad, but it is not good enough to sell as Beveda cloth. Here and there will come a streak, and sometimes the colors run a little light and again a little dark. It would not pay them to cut out the perfect strips and sell them as short lengths. They are putting the cloth on the market and selling it as it stands. Do you gentlemen think you could dispose of such a product?”

“At what price?” a salesman asked.

“At ten cents a yard.”

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"It is regular Beveda cloth with the exception that the color is not even?"

"Yes."

"We ought to be able to do business with manufacturers who make up for the cheap trade."

Mr. Hecker nodded. "It ought to go. It's a chance worth taking."

Mr. MacMackin nodded. "That's how I feel about it. I intend to order twenty thousand yards. You can have samples in the morning."

Harry went back to his desk trying to figure if his trade would take any of the product. He could not think of a single customer who might be interested.

"Well," said Mr. Claxton, "think you'll do as well with this as with Beveda cloth?"

Harry shook his head. "I don't think I'll be able to touch this."

"Give it a trial, anyway. It doesn't cost anything to carry a sample."

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"Oh, I'll try it out," Harry said.

Next morning the samples were in the department. Harry rolled out the bolt and went searching through it.

"What's that for?" Mr. Hecker seemed interested.

"I want to find a piece where the color changes."

"Why?"

"Then I can show my trade just what they'll get if they buy."

Mr. Hecker smiled. Here was another example of brains that sold goods.

Harry went forth on his journey. All that day, as he took orders for other kinds of cloth, he showed his sample. The mill called this Adeveb cloth, the word Adeveb being Beveda spelled backwards.

His efforts brought failure. None of the manufacturers was willing to take a chance on the product. Mr. Blum studied it a long time.

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"How much is bad, how much good?" he asked.

Harry shook his head. "I do not know, Mr. Blum."

"I must buy with my eyes closed, no?"

Harry nodded.

Mr. Blum finally decided not to invest. He conducted his business on small capital, and he could not afford to risk running into so much of the spoiled cloth as to invite a loss.

When evening came, Harry retraced his steps to the store to write shipping tickets for the goods he had sold. Mr. Hecker wanted to know if he had sold any Adeveb cloth.

"Not a yard," he answered.

"Dropping it?"

"Oh, no. I may sell a lot tomorrow."

"That's what wins," the salesman told him. "Keeping at it all the time."

During the course of the next day Harry dropped in at the Economy Skirt Company.

"Think you can use that?" he asked Mr.

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Burke, placing his sample on a table in the sample room.

"Why, that's Beveda cloth," said the senior partner of the firm. "Hello! What's wrong with it?"

"Dye," Harry answered.

Mr. Burke examined the cloth. His eyes asked a question. Harry explained about the run of the dye and the fact that the goods under no circumstances could be returned.

"Ten cents a yard, eh?" Mr. Burke asked.

"Yes, sir."

The man fingered the cloth. "It's a bargain if the stuff runs good at all. I'd like to take a chance on this."

Harry pulled out his order book.

"Here," laughed Mr. Burke, "put that away. I'm not going to dabble. We're doing a nice business in straight goods. Buying that fabric would be nothing more nor less than a gamble, and our lines are running too well to make it worth our while."

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Harry started to put the order book away.

"I'll tell you where you might do business with that stuff," Mr. Burke said suddenly.

Harry was all interest. "Where?"

"Crescent Cloak and Suit Company. You know them?"

Harry frowned. "I know of them." Where had he heard the name of that firm before? Who had said something to him about the Crescent Cloak and Suit Company?

"They specialize in cheap clothing for the poorest of the southern negroes. Those people have little money and they must have clothing. The Crescent people try to fill the bill. You ought to be able to land something there."

"I'll try it," said Harry. He made a note of the firm name. From a telephone book he got the address.

"Going there right away?" Mr. Burke asked.

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"Oh, no." Harry shook his head. "Thank you for the tip, though."

"Wish I could do more for you," said Mr. Burke.

There was one big reason why Harry did not want to rush right off to the concern. He was excited over the prospect of landing a new account and a big order. He knew from experience that it was best to call on his trade when he was calm and thoroughly in command of all his faculties. Besides, before going there, Harry wanted to get a line on the firm. He hurried back to the cloth department.

"Anybody know anything about the Crescent Cloak and Suit Company?" he asked.

Mr. Claxton bowed. "I do. This is just the place to come for information."

Harry smiled. "What do you know about them?"

"I know that they make about the cheapest suits and dresses that go out of town. They manufacture for those people who have very,

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very little money. A good cheap cloth will find a welcome there every time."

"How's their credit?" Harry asked.

"Good."

"Who's their buyer?"

"A Mr. Steinberg," Mr. Claxton answered.

"He's a fine fellow and plays no favorites. If you have the goods he'll do business with you. What are you going to try to sell him?"

"Adeveb cloth."

Mr. Claxton groaned. "Why didn't I think of going there? Well, good luck to you, Dale. In a few years you'll make some of us old-timers hang our heads in shame."

Harry laughed. "I guess I have a long way to go before I'm in the class of the old-timers."

He was tired when he reached home. He found his father shaving in the bathroom.

"I have tickets for the theater, Harry."

The boy's face fell.

"Hello!" said his father. "What's wrong?"

"I'm tired, dad. I thought I'd get to bed

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early and have a good night's sleep. I'm going to tackle a new firm in the morning."

"Then to bed it is," said his father.

"But if you've paid for tickets——"

"I'd sooner lose the dollar I spent for your ticket, than have you lose a business chance tomorrow."

When Mrs. Dale learned that Harry was not to go she became deeply concerned. Didn't he feel well? Was he feverish?

"Nonsense, mother," laughed Mr. Dale. "Harry's all right. He's tired, and like a wise man, he's going to go to bed."

Harry ate a hearty supper, and his mother's fears departed. He read in the library until nine o'clock. Then he took himself off to bed. It seemed that he must have fallen asleep at once, for when he opened his eyes again it was daylight, and the clock on his dresser showed half-past six.

Harry yawned, stretched and sat up in bed. He felt as though here was a day when he

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could do a big job. He ran to the bathroom, filled the tub with cold water, and took a quick dip. Ten minutes later, pink and glowing, he was finishing his dressing. From downstairs came the appetizing smell of breakfast. He was hungry as a wolf.

He intended to go to the Crescent Cloak and Suit Company as soon as he sorted his Monday morning mail. But after the mail was out of the way, a steady train of his customers came to the cloth department. At noon he found himself free at last.

He knew from experience that the lunch hour is a bad time to try to sell goods. There is always the chance of finding that the man you want to see is out. So, instead of going off in quest of business, Harry walked up to Connie's for dinner. He was hungry, and prepared to do justice to whatever he might order. Without appearing to do so, he looked about the place, but Billings was not in sight.

He did not hurry his meal. His thoughts

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were now working along a line that made him frown more than once. Somewhere he had heard of the Crescent Cloak and Suit Company. Where?

He had an idea that he had heard of the firm under unpleasant circumstances, for the words brought to him a vague feeling of something wrong. He was provoked that he should be bothered, and not be able to put his finger on what it was that caused him uneasiness. For, all at once, he realized that he was uneasy.

However, he shook off the mood, after awhile, finished his dinner, paid his check and went out into the street. His watch showed fifteen minutes past one. It was time for him to be on his way.

The Crescent Cloak and Suit Company was not in the regular manufacturing district. Harry boarded a trolley car and rode to his destination. He swung off at the nearest corner, and walked up the block.

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A sign, in big gilt letters, ran across the third and fourth floors of a big building. And as Harry read the words: CRESCENT CLOAK & SUIT COMPANY, his uneasiness returned. He felt like a person who awakens in the morning feeling nervous because of some disturbing dream that he cannot quite recall.

The elevator carried him to the third floor. He walked to the office. He asked for Mr. Steinberg, and a boy took his card and disappeared through a door.

There were some photographs on the wall, and Harry turned to look at them. Then a voice came to his ears.

"What can I do for you, Mr. Dale?"

He swung around. There stood Arnold Keith, whom he had met when with Billings at the Daylight Club.

"I should like to see Mr. Steinberg," Harry answered.

"Mr. Steinberg is busy. I am the assistant

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buyer. If you have any samples you can show them to me here."

The voice was insolent and sarcastic. Harry knew that showing this young man samples would be almost useless. Yet he displayed his wares and tried to explain the nature of the goods.

Instead of looking at the fabric, Keith looked at him and yawned. Harry's talk became a rambling, confused jumble. Keith grinned.

"I guess you can put that away, Dale. I don't care for it. Good-day."

Harry, hot, rebellious and defeated, folded his samples. He heard the door opened.

"Hello, Arnold," came Billings's voice.

Keith became lively and animated. "Hello, Billings. Got some samples to show me? Step right into the sample room. Dale has been wasting a bit of my time out here."

Harry's face felt as though somebody had burned it. He threw the samples over his arm

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and walked to the door. As he passed out into the hall he was conscious of the fact that Keith and Billings were looking after him and laughing.

CHAPTER IX

A NEW PLAN

LONG before Harry reached the street he knew where and when he had heard of the Crescent Cloak and Suit Company. He had heard of the firm at the Daylight Club when Billings had introduced Keith as an assistant buyer.

"No wonder," Harry reflected, "I felt uneasy."

He wasn't angry because of the turn affairs had taken. He had reached the point where he could take the bad with the good. But he was acutely disappointed. He had figured on making almost a sure sale. And he thought that he might have made a sale had there been a disposition to look at his samples. But Arnold Keith had not looked at them. Keith

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had taken advantage of an opportunity to make him feel cheap.

His blood began to grow hot when he contrasted Billings's reception with his own. He checked this line of thought at once.

"Here," he said wisely, "this will never do. Of course he'd give Billings the best of everything. Billings is his friend. And of course he'd rub it into me if he could. I won't do any good by letting myself get sore."

All day he worked hard trying to shake off the disappointment that still clung to him. Every now and then his mind would go back to the scene with Keith. And at last, seeing that he could not control his thoughts, he resolved to have it out with himself and find where he stood.

Of one fact he was certain, the Crescent Cloak and Suit Company offered a market for Adeveb cloth. Mr. Burke was a shrewd man. Mr. Burke had told him that there he would find a market. He believed thoroughly

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that he could sell the goods if he got a fair chance. But how was he to get past Arnold Keith? And if he did get past Keith to Mr. Steinberg, Keith would probably belittle his efforts and prejudice the head buyer against him.

"I'll go back," he vowed suddenly, and swung around in his tracks. He even walked a block or two before coming to a halt.

"No use," he said reluctantly. "I'd see Keith again, and Keith would send me about my business."

He retraced his steps. By the time he came in sight of the big stone building of the A. R. Sheppard Company, his mind was made up.

"I'll stick," he said. "I'll make them buy my stuff."

When he reached the cloth department Mr. Claxton asked him if he had sold anything to the Crescent people.

"No, sir," he answered.

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"That's mighty strange." The salesman scratched his chin. "I thought you were sure of landing an order there."

"So did I."

"Well, what happened?"

Harry related how Keith had treated him, where he had met Keith before, and of the advent of Billings.

"Billings again," said Mr. Claxton. "That fellow's crossing your path quite often, isn't he?"

"Yes, sir." Harry hesitated. "Perhaps if you tried them you could——"

But Mr. Claxton shook his head. "Dale," he smiled, "this is your fight. If you succeed in selling there you'll feel pretty good. And you're entitled to another chance. Go to it. If you finally conclude you can't land anything, I'll take a crack at it. But I want you to have your chance first."

Harry thanked him and walked over to his desk. He had never before seen Mr. Claxton

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in this light. He had thought him careless and indifferent to some of the finer things. Now, however, he got a look into Mr. Claxton's heart.

"He's all right," Harry muttered. "I'll try to do him a good turn some day."

That evening, shortly before closing time, Mr. Hecker met him near the clothing closet.

"Do you know that salesmen in all departments are using your letter idea?" Mr. Hecker asked.

"Are they?" Harry was pleased. "Is it accomplishing anything?"

"I guess it is. I had a talk today with Mr. Owens, of the notion department. Know him?"

Harry shook his head.

"He's one of the old timers. He told me that he had been selling to a concern up state for years, but could never seem to get the orders he thought he should have received. He began to acknowledge their orders by mail.

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He says that in the last month his business there has doubled."

"Isn't that fine? If every salesman could show results like that the House would have a dandy year, wouldn't it?"

Mr. Hecker smiled quietly. Here was a boy who, instead of taking glory from the incident, merely saw the good that would come to his employer.

"You haven't thought of the Sheppard Prize, have you?" Mr. Hecker asked suddenly.

"I have not," Harry answered, "and I'm not going to. Why, that was only a letter."

"That's all," Mr. Hecker answered dryly.

That night, after supper, Harry's mother went off to visit a neighbor. The boy followed his father up to the library.

"Got a few minutes to spare, dad?"

"Certainly. What is it, Harry?"

He told about his trip to the Crescent Cloak and Suit Company.

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"What do you think I had better do, dad?"

Mr. Dale stared ahead thoughtfully. "Let's get this straight, Harry. What do you know about this firm?"

"They make cheap clothing——"

"That's what you were told, wasn't it?"

"Yes, sir."

"What do you know personally?"

"N-nothing, I guess."

"So, as a matter of fact, you do not know, of your own knowledge, whether Adeveb cloth would appeal to them or not."

"No, sir."

Mr. Dale tapped his fingers together. "Of course," he said, "selling life insurance is not the same as selling dry goods. But—Would you care to hear about my methods?"

"Yes, sir."

"The first thing we get in the life insurance line," said Mr. Dale, "is a prospect. By that, I mean, a person who is a possible purchaser of life insurance. He has either shown an

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interest of his own accord, or we have gotten him interested, or he is going to be married and wants insurance to protect his bride. There are a hundred reasons as to why a person becomes a prospect.

"Once we have located our prospect, the next step is to sell him insurance. So far, my business runs parallel with yours, doesn't it?"

"How so?" Harry asked.

"First you must find a buyer interested in your line, then you must sell him."

"Oh!" Harry smiled. "I see now."

"There are many different forms of insurance," his father went on, "just as there are many different forms of dry goods. Once I have located my prospect, I try to decide what form of insurance would interest him. If he is a twenty-two-dollar-a-week clerk, I do not try to sell him a five-thousand-dollar endowment policy. Do you understand?"

"You mean," Harry said, "that having figured just what he can afford to spend for in-

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surance, you talk policies that can be bought for that sum."

"Exactly. Now, it strikes me that you are trying to sell goods without knowing——"

Harry sprang up. His father smiled and became silent. After a few minutes the boy stopped short.

"You've given me a plan, dad," he said. "I haven't got it all figured out, but it looks good."

"All plans look good at the start," Mr. Dale warned.

"I'm going to think this one out," said Harry.

CHAPTER X

HARRY'S CAMPAIGN

LONG after the house was dark and everybody else was in bed, Harry sat in his room twisting his plan every way to see if it had any loopholes. So far as he could see, it had not. He went to bed resolved that he would win out in the end—provided he found that the Crescent Cloak and Suit Company was as good a market as he thought.

At breakfast next morning he was cheerful and happy. His father looked at him as much as to ask, "All right?" He gave a nod and a smile.

He had resolved that the best thing to do would be to spend part of an afternoon in the showroom of the company. Garments would

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be on display. He could see the styles and the quality of the goods. Of course, he was not an expert on cloth, but he thought he would be able to tell whether what he had to offer would stand a chance.

There were two things that threatened to upset all his plans. He did not close his eyes to them. They were:

First, Arnold Keith would try to keep him away from Mr. Steinberg.

Second, If he did get a hearing from the head buyer, Keith would try to prejudice his cause.

However, his mind was made up. If he found that the company could use what he had to offer, he would in some way reach Mr. Steinberg, Keith or no Keith. Mr. Claxton had told him that Mr. Steinberg played no favorites. If he offered something good he was sure that he would be able to do business.

Today was Friday. He thought that he

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might run around to the cloak and suit company that afternoon. But there were many mail orders to fill, several letters to write, and on top of these came word of two city shipments that had gone astray. He spent several hours trying to straighten things out in the shipping department. One order was found thrown in with a mass of cases and bales and packages that were to be shipped south by boat. The other order had gone out on a wrong delivery wagon. Harry came back to the department and telephoned to his two customers that they would have their orders that day.

Then a customer came in angry and excited. The credit department had held up a shipment, and he brought in his receipted bills to prove that his accounts were in good order. By the time this matter had been adjusted, it was too late in the day to inspect cloaks or suits. Harry sighed.

"Tomorrow," he reflected, "is Saturday and

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a half holiday. I won't be able to do a thing. I'll let this go until Monday, and then I'll get on the job."

Next morning there was so little business that Harry felt like kicking himself. He could have gone off to the showroom of the suit company without being missed.

Mr. Dale asked him that night if he had thought out his plan. Harry told his father what he intended doing.

"Good!" Mr. Dale nodded his head approvingly. "That ought to tell you whether or not you have a prospect. And as for Keith——"

"Yes, sir?" Harry asked eagerly.

"You ought to be able to find a way to overcome that. A good salesman will always find a way to reach the man he is after."

Harry made up his mind that he would try to be a good salesman.

He had sense enough to know that it would do him no good to keep thinking about what

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he was going to do. Sunday, after church, he went for a long walk. He came home to dinner with a clear eye and with a fresh color in his cheeks. During the afternoon he sat around and read trade journals. That night he went early to bed.

In the morning, he and his father left the house together. At the corner their ways separated. Mr. Dale put a hand on his son's arm.

"Take your time, Harry," he advised. "Don't jump at conclusions. Investigate thoroughly. Get what you're after firmly fixed in your mind. Then, when you start ahead, you won't have to stop to wonder if you're right."

Harry hurried away to the cloth department. He hoped that there would be little to detain him. His hopes were realized. By ten o'clock he was through with his mail, and was out in the street.

He went directly to the Crescent Cloak and

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Suit Company. When the elevator reached the third floor he stepped out and entered the office.

"Will you please tell me where I can find the showroom?" he asked.

A clerk told him that the showroom was on the fourth floor.

He did not bother to wait for the elevator. As in most buildings that are of strictly a manufacturing type, the stairway was dark and narrow. He climbed to the floor above. In gold letters on a glass door were these words:

CRESCENT CLOAK & SUIT COMPANY

SHOW-ROOMS

He entered boldly. Two or three salesmen were showing garments to customers. Harry ran his eyes over the array, wondering where to begin.

A young woman approached him. "Anything we can do for you, sir?"

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"No, thank you," Harry answered. "I would like to look around."

"I will have a salesman give you prices——"

"I do not intend to buy," Harry said. "I want to look over your line—that is all."

"Oh!" The young woman glanced at him suspiciously, and walked away.

Harry began at the nearest row. These were suits. Before he had gone far, he saw that this cloth was more expensive than Beveda cloth. He turned to another row of suits.

"Beg pardon," said a voice, "but can I do anything for you today?"

Harry, looking over his shoulder, saw that this time it was a young man who had addressed him. Out of the corner of his eye he saw that the young woman who had first approached him was watching intently.

"No, thank you," Harry answered.

"If you care for prices——"

"I am not interested in prices."

"Oh!" The young man said the word just

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as the young woman had said it. "Perhaps you are a buyer merely looking over styles for future consideration——"

"I am not a buyer," Harry laughed, "I am a salesman."

The young man's face clouded. He hesitated a moment, and walked away.

Two of the other salesmen had finished with their customers. They, with the young man and the young woman, formed a group of four. They put their heads together and whispered, and watched the visitor who did not want to buy.

"Mackerel!" Harry muttered. "I surely am a mystery to those people."

And then, of a sudden, he forgot them. For he had reached a part of the showroom where everything seemed of the cheapest. He was sure that the garment he now examined was made of a fabric far inferior to Adeveb cloth even to the point of dye. He held the garment up to the light. The overskirt was

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all right, but the underskirt seemed to be lighter in spots.

"I have it now," the boy thought excitedly. "They could use Adeveb cloth. The good parts of the cloth could be used for what would show, and the places where the dye ran bad could be used for the parts that would be hidden. Wait until I compare this garment with my Adeveb sample."

"Perhaps you would be interested in the price of that garment," said a voice in his ear.

This time it was one of the older salesmen. Harry was annoyed.

"I did not come here to buy," he said shortly.

"No? Then why——"

"I am interested in your line. I want to examine it."

"What manufacturer do you represent?"

"I do not represent a manufacturer," said Harry.

He had cut a small piece of Adeveb cloth

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to compare with whatever he might find. Now, though he searched eagerly through his pockets, he could not locate the fabric. He would have to go back to the department and cut a new piece.

He turned quickly toward the door that led to the hall. As he passed out of the room he was conscious of the fact that his hurried going had created almost as much of a sensation as his examination of the garments.

"Queer place," he reflected. "I wonder is that how they treat all the people who visit the showroom."

Harry forgot that people who visit manufacturers' showrooms go there to buy.

He feared that when he reached the cloth department, there would be several customers awaiting his attention. However, nobody was there. Dowd, one of the shipping clerks, told him that the Economy Skirt Company had telephoned in an order for three hundred yards of navy blue Beveda cloth.

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"I'll attend to that at once," Harry said.
"Thank you, Dowd."

"I attended to it already," the stock clerk grinned. "I knew you're particular about that account so I sent the goods downstairs at once. Going for the day?"

"No; I'll be back before closing time."

"Shall I attend to your mail if you're not back?"

"If I'm not here by half-past four you might look it over." Harry hurried away. Dowd gave a whistle.

"He's after something," he reflected. "He sure is one hustler. No wonder he's a salesman and I'm still in stock."

Harry did not have time for a dinner at Connie's today. He entered a small restaurant, ordered a sandwich and a glass of milk, and ten minutes later was on his way back to the suit company.

"I suppose they'll throw a fit when they see me come back," he grinned.

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Nor was he mistaken. As soon as he entered the showroom the young woman gave a gasp and stared at him as though he was a ghost. He expected to see her call the salesmen. Evidently, though, two of them were at luncheon, for when the young woman walked quickly to the rear of the room and spoke, only the young man came out from behind the display that had hidden him.

They held an excited discussion. Meanwhile, Harry took the Adeveb sample from his pocket. When the young woman saw him compare the sample with the garment, she clutched the young man's arm and talked rapidly.

Suddenly a light broke in on Harry. He knew now why he had caused all the commotion. He had come to examine their wares but not to buy. They suspected him of being an agent from some rival manufacturer who wanted information as to their complete line. Harry had heard that men went around exam-

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ining suits so that they could copy styles, but he had never believed it. He had always thought that if a manufacturer wanted to copy a style, the simplest thing to do would be to buy one of the garments he wanted to imitate.

The young man hurried out of the room. Harry suspected that he had gone to summon someone in authority. Suppose Arnold Keith should come to see what the fuss was all about? Harry's jaw hardened.

He carefully noted the sample of Adeveb cloth and the garment he held. The fabric he sought to sell was of superior weave. The only difference was in the dye. He had cut a sample just where there was a shading. The difference in color was more pronounced than in the underskirt of the garment. But if a difference in shade could be hidden, did it matter much whether the difference was slight or pronounced?

He heard footsteps. Was this Keith? He

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looked up. A short, thickset man stood almost beside him.

"You seem to be quite interested in our line," the man said crisply.

"I am," Harry admitted.

"Might I ask whom you represent?"

Harry held out his card. The man raised his eyebrows.

"The A. R. Sheppard Company. Humph! The Sheppard Company are wholesalers. They are not interested in the garments of a manufacturer—not in the way you seem to be interested. How am I to know that you are Harry Dale?"

"Telephone to my department head, Mr. MacMackin. Ask him to describe me."

The man nodded. "We won't go that far—for the present. What are you doing here?"

"Looking at these garments——"

"So I see. Why?"

"To see if this company would be interested in what I have to sell."

HARRY DALE, CITY SALESMAN

This time the man plainly showed interest. "Why do you not take what you have to sell to Mr. Steinberg?"

"I tried to," Harry answered, "but the assistant buyer told me the firm was not interested in what I had."

"Was that not satisfactory?"

"No, sir."

"Why?"

"Because I think this firm is interested in what I have to sell. Mr. Burke told me to try here——"

"Mr. Burke, of the Economy Skirt Company?"

"Yes, sir. He told me to try. I tried. I did not succeed. I did not know whether to keep on trying or whether to stop. So I came here today to see if you use cloth along the grade of what I have to offer."

"And?"

"I think now that I have something that this firm should have."

HARRY'S CAMPAIGN

"So!" The man gave Harry a long, appraising look. "You say you have already tried to see Mr. Steinberg?"

"Yes, sir."

"What time did you come here?"

"During the early afternoon."

"So! And Mr. Keith told you we were not interested?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did he look at your samples?"

"Y-yes, sir."

This time the man's eyes snapped. "It is always possible for a salesman to reach Mr. Steinberg," he said. "Could you come here tomorrow morning at eight o'clock?"

"I could come earlier than that if necessary."

"Eight o'clock will do. I think if you came tomorrow morning at that hour you could see Mr. Steinberg."

"I'll be here to the minute," Harry said joyously. He hesitated a moment. "There—

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there won't be any slip-up about my seeing him, will there?"

"No." The man glanced at the card Harry had given him. "I will leave word at the office to admit you as soon as you call."

CHAPTER XI

SUCCESS

HARRY went away delighted. What a lucky thing it was that he had gone to the showroom. The way was now open for him to do business.

He hurried back to the cloth department. Tomorrow he would go from his home straight to the Crescent Cloak and Suit Company. Tonight he would take home the samples that he would carry with him in the morning.

Dowd, the stock clerk, had not opened his mail. Harry read the letters, filled his orders, and then set to work cutting his samples.

"Well," Mr. Claxton asked, "have you done anything with the Crescent people?"

HARRY DALE, CITY SALESMAN

"I have an appointment at eight tomorrow morning," Harry told him happily.

"With Mr. Steinberg?"

"Yes, sir."

"You got past Keith, didn't you?"

Harry's face fell. "I suppose Keith will be there tomorrow," he said. This was the only cloud on his horizon.

It did not take him long to make up his mind that worrying about Keith would do no good. That was a bridge he would cross when he came to it.

He reached home that night bursting with impatience to tell his good news. Almost as soon as he came into the hall he called loudly:

"Dad! Are you home?"

"Here, Harry."

"I landed it," the boy cried. "I'm to see Mr. Steinberg in the morning."

His mother came from the dining-room and he told his adventures of the day.

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"Who was the man who straightened things out for you?" his father asked.

Harry gave a slow smile. "I never thought of asking, I was so excited. I'll see him tomorrow, no doubt, and I'll thank him for arranging things for me."

Tonight Mr. Dale had tickets for a church concert, but he had to visit an insurance prospect. So Harry escorted his mother. He was in a joyous mood. The morrow seemed full of promise. He enjoyed the music and the singing and was sorry when the last number was reached.

When he reached home Mrs. Dale suggested a bite of supper before going to bed.

"Not for me, thank you," Harry laughed. "I want to get up in the morning with a clear head. I might wake up feeling logy."

Usually the family breakfasted at half-past seven. Tomorrow, though, that would be too late for Harry. He set his alarm clock thirty minutes ahead and climbed into bed.

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It seemed but a few minutes later when he heard a bell. He turned on one side and tried to ignore it, but the bell kept on ringing. He opened his eyes. Why, it was daylight. The bell was his alarm clock. He thought of all that this day might mean, and threw aside the bed covers.

When he came downstairs, a few minutes before seven o'clock, his breakfast was ready. He finished eating, took up his samples and prepared to depart. He stopped at the foot of the stairs. He could hear his father splashing in the bathroom tub.

"O dad!"

"Yes?" His father's voice was muffled a bit by the closed bathroom door.

"I'm going."

"Good luck."

"Thank you. Good-by, mother."

"Good-by, Harry. I hope everything turns out well."

"Oh, I guess it will." Harry threw open the

SUCCESS

door and ran down the outdoor steps to the street.

The day was bleak and dark, with a heavy promise of rain. Harry, though, did not notice the weather. If everything went as he hoped—— A trolley car stopped at the corner. He ran to catch it.

A few minutes before eight o'clock he reached his destination. Usually, when he came into these buildings where manufacturers had their plants, his ears were greeted by the whir of racing sewing machines. Now, though, the building was almost quiet. Usually these machines were not started until eight o'clock. In a few minutes, he knew, the racket would break out.

He went directly to the office. The same young woman who had directed him to the showroom now took his card and disappeared. In a few minutes she returned.

"This way, sir."

Harry followed her. He wondered what

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Keith would say. When they entered the next room his eyes searched for that young man, but Keith was not there. Then, over at a desk, he saw the man he had met yesterday afternoon in the showroom.

"Good morning, sir," Harry greeted.

"Good morning," the man answered.

Harry's eyes unconsciously wandered about the room. "Am I a little too early for Mr. Steinberg?"

"I am Mr. Steinberg," was the answer.

Harry gave a gasp. Then he had been talking to Mr. Steinberg yesterday without knowing it.

"I—I didn't think——" he began to stammer.

Mr. Steinberg smiled. "I imagine," he said, "that you can do your share of thinking. That was a clever idea, studying our line. And now, if you will show me your samples——"

Harry took them from his arm and laid them on the desk. Mr. Steinberg picked them

SUCCESS

up and carried them to the window. Almost at once he looked around curiously.

"Adeveb cloth?" he asked.

"Yes, sir."

"And your price?"

"Ten cents a yard for the goods as they run."

"As they run? What do you mean by that?"

"I mean, sir, that there can be no returns. If the goods are bought they must be accepted as they are received."

Mr. Steinberg's brows contracted. "Just what is wrong with the goods, Dale?"

"The dye does not run even."

"Why do you think we could use goods that do not run even?"

"Another manufacturer—— Oh, I told you about Mr. Burke. Well, when I examined that last garment, I saw that the underskirt—the part that doesn't show—was a bit off color."

"You were sharp to notice it."

"That's what I was looking for."

HARRY DALE, CITY SALESMAN

"Were you? But about this dye? Cloth that is a bit off we can use. But if cloth was away off, the work of cutting and arranging the off-color pieces might be so extensive that it might not pay us. You have no idea just how badly this stuff runs?"

"No, sir. But I cut generous pieces for samples, and I cut them from places where the dye ran poorly. If you will spread out the samples, sir——"

Mr. Steinberg spread them out. While he was examining them, the door opened. Somebody came in whistling gayly. Footsteps approached, and stopped. Harry looked up. There stood Keith.

"Good morning," Harry said.

"Good morning." Keith looked as though somebody had hit him with a club.

Mr. Steinberg's sharp eyes did not fail to notice Keith's embarrassment. Perhaps Keith felt that he was under observation. He said hurriedly:

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"Those five cases——"

"I do not want them in yet. Leave them on the sidewalk," Mr. Steinberg cut in. "Recognize that cloth, Keith?"

The assistant buyer gave it a quick glance. "Adeveb cloth, sir?"

"Yes. Did this young man tell you the price the other day when he showed you his samples?"

Keith did not dare try to tell an untruth. "Yes, sir," he admitted grudgingly.

"How did you come to decide that we couldn't use this stuff at the price?"

"Why, sir, the dye——"

"Just a moment." Mr. Steinberg turned suddenly to Harry. "What day did you show these samples?"

"Last Thursday," Harry answered.

Mr. Steinberg turned back to Keith. "Yet that same day you brought Billings, of Prince, Henderson & Prince, to me with the same proposition. How about that, Keith?"

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"I—I saw Billings after Dale had gone," Keith stammered. "By that time I had begun to see that it was a bargain——"

"It may not be so big a bargain as you think," Mr. Steinberg interrupted. "Dale says this cloth is pretty much gone from unevenness in the dyeing. Isn't that right, Dale?"

"Yes, sir."

"And that we cannot return?"

"Yes, sir."

"Billings sold us that stuff on the representation that the dye ran bad here and there and that his firm had an inside price which enabled it to sell so cheaply. How about that, Keith?"

By this time Keith was thinking only of his own job. To save himself he was ready to sacrifice every friend he had.

"I know nothing," he hastened to say, "except what Billings told us. If he has fooled us——"

"We'll soon see about that," Mr. Steinberg

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said grimly. "On what terms did the Sheppard people buy this cloth from the mill, Dale? Do you know?"

"On the same terms that we offer it at wholesale. They explained to us that the dye ran uneven. We bought outright with no privilege of return."

"Prince, Henderson & Prince must have bought the same way," said Mr. Steinberg. "Open one of those cases, Keith. Leave them on the sidewalk. Open one and bring in a bolt."

Keith hurried out of the room as though he was glad to get away. Mr. Steinberg paced back and forth. Once or twice he talked to himself and Harry heard him say something about good weave and a chance if the dye wasn't too bad.

Presently Keith came back with a bolt of cloth.

"Unwind it," said Mr. Steinberg. The bolt was stripped. Yard by yard the head buyer

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examined the fabric. Finally he tossed the cloth aside.

"Have it sent outside and rerolled," he told Keith. "Only a bad dye here and there, eh? Why, there's a bolt of fifty yards, and about twelve yards are bad." He reached for a telephone. "What's Prince, Henderson & Prince's number?"

Keith told him, and carried the cloth away.

Mr. Steinberg waited. "Hello," he said. "I want to speak to Billings." A pause. Then: "Billings? This is Steinberg of the Crescent Cloak and Suit. I'm sending back that Adeveb cloth. I know our agreement was no return, but you misrepresented the goods. The mill sold you the cloth with an honest statement of how the dye ran. You came in here and lied to me. Back it goes, every yard of it. What's that? What will you tell your firm? Tell them you lied. Good-by."

Keith was back in the room and had heard

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the closing words of the talk. He looked sick and miserable.

"Have that stuff sent back," Mr. Steinberg ordered. "And Keith, let me give you a piece of advice. Cut away from that Billings crowd. Understand?"

"Yes, sir." Keith went humbly from the room.

Harry gathered up his samples. Once more Mr. Steinberg paced the room. After awhile he stopped.

"It's still worth a chance," he said. "Dale, send me two cases. I took five from that fellow Billings, on his representation that the dye ran bad only here and there. I can't plunge that heavily now knowing the real condition. Two cases will be plenty until I see what I can get out of it. Give me the giddy colors—reds, pinks, light blue."

Harry wrote the order. As he slipped his memorandum book in his pocket Mr. Steinberg held out his hand.

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"Good morning," he said. "I'm glad to have met you, Dale. If we give any repeat orders, rest assured you'll get them."

"Thank you," said Harry. "I'll hustle back to the store and get this stuff started. You may receive it tonight."

CHAPTER XII

A NEW HORIZON

WHEN Harry reached the sidewalk Keith was standing with his hands in his pockets watching a man nail a cover on one of five cases. All five bore a mark telling that they came from Prince, Henderson & Prince.

"If Billings had played square," Harry thought, "he'd have landed just what I got, a two-case order. Instead, he has nothing, and perhaps he'll get into trouble with his House."

The day had turned drizzly, but Harry did not mind a little thing like that. He turned up his collar and started up the street. Then Keith saw him.

"Wait a minute, Dale," he called.

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Harry paused. Keith came up hunching his shoulders threateningly.

"What did you tell Mr. Steinberg about me?" he demanded.

"Nothing," Harry answered. "I'm in business to sell goods, not to carry tales."

Keith sneered. His eyes met Harry's and he tried to give a confident, superior stare. After a moment, though, his gaze wavered, a flush came into his cheeks and he turned his head away.

"It's a good thing you didn't say anything about me," he said lamely. He went back to the packing cases and Harry hurried off.

"Keith had better look out for himself," he reflected, "or he'll be out of a job. Mr. Steinberg is beginning to put two and two together."

When he got back to the cloth department he immediately wrote out the Crescent Cloak and Suit Company order. It speedily became noised through the department that he had

A NEW HORIZON

sold two cases of Adeveb cloth. Mr. Hecker laughed.

"It takes that boy Dale to find customers for the bargains," the veteran salesman said. "Give him ten more years and he'll have the cream of the trade."

Mr. Claxton came to Harry's desk. "I see you landed the Crescent people," he said.

Harry nodded.

"How did you get past Keith?"

"I got there before Keith came to work."

Mr. Claxton looked at him thoughtfully. "How did you know what time Keith reached his office?"

"Oh, it was easy to find that out," Harry parried. He did not want to talk about his exploit.

Mr. Claxton was not fooled. During the course of the day he remarked more than once, "That kid has done another clever trick, but he won't talk about it."

During the afternoon Mr. MacMackin and

HARRY DALE, CITY SALESMAN

Mr. Hecker strolled through the department aisles noting the appearance of the stock.

"I suppose," said Mr. Hecker, "you know that Dale landed a pretty good order for Adeveb cloth?"

Mr. MacMackin nodded. "I saw a memorandum of the sale. Crescent Cloak and Suit Company, wasn't it?"

"Yes." Mr. Hecker smiled. "They're a pretty hard House to reach. It's got to be a real bargain to make them bite. I wonder how he thought about going there?"

"He went there, that's the point," Mr. MacMackin answered. "Results count."

"He must have had a hard time of it," Mr. Hecker said.

Mr. MacMackin showed interest. "How?"

"Why, a young chap named Keith is assistant buyer. He is a great friend of Billings. When Dale refused to have another thing to do with the Daylight Club, Keith was very much put out."

A NEW HORIZON

"Was he a member of the club?"

"Yes—or at least I understand so. When Dale first went to the Crescent people, Keith came out to see him and turned him down flat. Evidently, though, he found a way to get past Keith, for he reached Mr. Steinberg."

Mr. MacMackin chuckled. "Trust Dale for that. How did he do it?"

Mr. Hecker smiled. "I don't know. Claxton tried to pump him, but he wouldn't talk. He's a great example of what a young man can accomplish if he works hard and thinks about his business."

"He's all of that," said Mr. MacMackin. "So he won't talk. Perhaps we'll get the details from some other source."

That night Harry told of the success of his campaign. His mother was delighted. Like all mothers, she thought her boy was the cleverest lad alive. Mr. Dale took a calmer view of the matter.

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"It's worth more to Harry than the sale," he said. "He's had another proof of how essential it is in business to play the game fairly. A man may prosper for awhile if he uses false standards, just as Billings prospered for awhile. But when the truth comes out, he is gone."

Harry nodded soberly. More and more, as the days passed, he saw how essential it was to keep in the middle of the road.

Mr. MacMackin's theory that the story of Harry's sale would come out proved to be correct. The first detail came from Mr. Claxton. He brought in word that Billings had been discharged by Prince, Henderson & Prince.

"I got it from one of their men," Mr. Claxton said. "It seems he sold some goods and misrepresented them. The buyer returned the goods. The firm refused them, claiming that they had been bought with the understanding that there was to be no return. The buyer

A NEW HORIZON

replied that the salesman had lied about the goods. Prince, Henderson & Prince made an investigation, and Billings walked the plank."

Harry had sat at his desk listening attentively to all that Mr. Claxton had said. Poor Billings! He was sorry for the young man who had made his path so rough. Perhaps if Billings had cut away from that Daylight Club crowd——

"You don't know anything about that Billings matter, Dale, do you?" Mr. Claxton asked suddenly.

Harry gave a start. "No, sir."

"That's strange." Mr. Claxton smiled.

"Why is it strange?" Harry asked.

"Why, I was told that one of our young men had had a hand in it. Of course, if you're not the man——"

Harry stood up hurriedly. "I must get some goods out," he said, and disappeared into one of the department aisles.

However, he reflected ruefully that he

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might just as well have stayed. Now that the story was out they would all know. The only reason he had refused to talk was for fear they'd think he was developing a swelled head.

For several days Mr. Claxton winked at him whenever they met. Gradually, though, this wore off. Harry heard a rumor that Billings had left town and had gone West. That same day he stopped at the Economy Skirt Company, and Mr. Burke gave him a merry greeting.

"Get over there in the light and let me look at you," he commanded. "I want to see if your brain shows."

"What's the matter with me?" Harry demanded.

"There's nothing the matter with you. You're all right. That idea of examining the line of the Crescent people was as good a play as I have ever heard of. That was bully stuff. If I had salesmen who could think that way

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I'd pay them fifty dollars a week and a commission on the side."

Harry flushed. "There was nothing to that," he said. "Everything turned out right, that's all." Then he became curious. "How did you hear of it?"

"How did I hear of it?" Mr. Burke grinned. "It's all over the district."

Harry walked back to the Sheppard store feeling a bit uncomfortable. If the news of what he had done had gone abroad, it was only a matter of a few days when the cloth department would know. He was not ashamed of his record, but he thought he would be just as well pleased if he could keep out of the limelight for awhile. Men like Mr. Hecker went on selling goods calmly and easily. They earned large salaries. Yet they never seemed to attract much attention.

What Harry did not understand was this: Big things were expected of Mr. Hecker. He

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knew his business from end to end. With the case of a youngster things were different.

When he got back to the cloth department, there was a note on his desk. He opened it:

I want to see you as soon as you come in.

MACMACKIN.

Harry wondered what this could mean. As he turned away somebody slapped him across the back.

"Been inspecting any showrooms today?" Mr. Claxton chuckled.

Harry laughed and tried to pass the matter off. He would make light of what he had done.

When he reached Mr. MacMackin's office the department head gave him a quizzical stare.

"Well, Dale," he asked, "what have you to say for yourself?"

"About what, sir?"

"About that little trick at the Crescent Company."

A NEW HORIZON

"That was an accident," Harry answered slowly.

"Mighty fortunate accident," Mr. MacMackin observed. "You haven't a few more such accidents up your sleeve, have you?"

Harry was forced to smile. "But it was an accident, sir," he continued. "I was stumped. I didn't know how to get in there. Some people think I went to the showroom just to have a big man of the firm come out so I could tell my story. I didn't think of that at all. I merely thought——"

"That's all," Mr. MacMackin said dryly.

"It wasn't even my own thought," Harry added. "My father told me that in his business, when he goes to sell insurance, he first tries to find out what his prospect can afford to spend for insurance. That gave me the idea——"

"So it was your idea."

Harry was silent a moment. "I'm getting too much credit," he said presently. "I didn't

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even think of going to the Crescent people. Mr. Burke told me——”

“Burke is one of your trade?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Then, if he gave you the tip, it must be that you have created a favorable impression. And, as that is the duty of a salesman, it seems to me that you deserve credit.”

“But,” Harry said, “it struck me that this was all an accident, sir—the way the whole thing worked out.”

Mr. MacMackin hitched around in his chair. “Dale,” he said, “have you ever noticed that these accidents always happen to the fellow who is on the job? I have. I’ve been noticing that for years. And it’s because I’ve been noticing these things that I have decided to give you a chance to see more of your business and have more accidents. How would you like to make a road trip?”

A road trip? Harry was staggered. Travel on trains, and put up at hotels, and visit strange

A NEW HORIZON

cities? How would he fare on such a mission?

"I'm afraid——" he faltered.

"I'm not," Mr. MacMackin cut in briskly. "I do not mean to make a road man of you, Dale. I want you in the department. But it struck me that one trip would broaden you. It would give you a chance to see how they do business in other places, to study conditions away from home. Would your parents object?"

"I do not know, sir."

"Well, put it up to them. How about you? Would you like it?"

"Yes, sir." Harry was sure of that much, anyway.

"Very well. Take it up with your people. If possible, I'd like to start you out after the first of the year." Mr. MacMackin's eyes suddenly began to twinkle. "Remember, Dale, the right sort of 'accidents' always happen to the fellow who is on the job."

CHAPTER XIII

THE SHEPPARD PRIZE

THE more Harry thought of making a road trip, the more it appealed to his sense of adventure. But when he reached home and told of Mr. MacMackin's offer, he saw his mother glance toward his father with frightened eyes.

"Now, mother," Mr. Dale smiled; "it isn't so bad as it seems."

"But Harry is so young," Mrs. Dale faltered.

"I'm almost twenty," Harry said indignantly.

"As old as that?" his father teased. "You'll be getting gray hairs before we know it."

Harry laughed. "Oh, well, dad, I mean

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that lots of fellows have to face the world alone at fifteen and sixteen."

"And many of them make mighty good men," Mr. Dale nodded. "It's a big chance for Harry, mother."

"He has never been away from home," Mrs. Dale said weakly.

"We can't have him with us always. He must try his wings some day."

"But—but the temptations of a young man away from his home and his people——"

Mr. Dale laid down his fork. "Do you think Harry is weak, mother?"

Mrs. Dale shook her head positively. "No."

"Then why worry about that? We've done our duty. We've tried to teach him to love the right and to despise the wrong. We've taught him to be clean. He knows the difference between right and wrong."

"But a young man——"

"If he has the makings of a bad egg in him,"

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Mr. Dale said positively, "it will come out sooner or later. Keeping him home with us won't change his nature. How long would this trip last, Harry?"

"About four weeks, sir."

Again the frightened look came to Mrs. Dale's face. Four whole weeks! She looked at her husband. He patted her arm.

"We'll talk this over afterwards, mother."

So the subject was dropped. After supper Mr. and Mrs. Dale retired to the library and closed the door. Harry stayed downstairs and tried to read. It was hard for him to keep his attention on his books, for he knew that upstairs his fate was being decided.

A long time afterwards the library door opened. His father called to him to come up. Harry took the stairs two at a time.

"We're going to let you make the trip," his father said. "There's just one thing I want to say: Never commit any act that you'd be ashamed to have your mother hear about."

THE SHEPPARD PRIZE

"Mother will never have to be ashamed of me," Harry answered stoutly.

Next morning he told Mr. MacMackin that he would make the trip. The news of what was in store for him spread through the department. Mr. Hecker gripped his hand and merely smiled, but that smile meant everything. Mr. Claxton held him off at arm's length and looked him over jovially.

"Ho!" he said. "You're a credit to me, Harry. You have made good every prediction I ever made concerning you. And now I'll make another: you'll come back from that road trip full of honors and orders."

Fall came, and ran its course toward winter. Harry, busy as usual, did his work and did it well. And so, at last, came Christmas Eve.

At four o'clock that afternoon a boy from the business office came quietly to his desk.

"Mr. Sheppard would like to see you, sir," said the boy.

Harry looked up blankly. "Mr. Sheppard?"

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"Yes, sir. I am to bring you to his office."

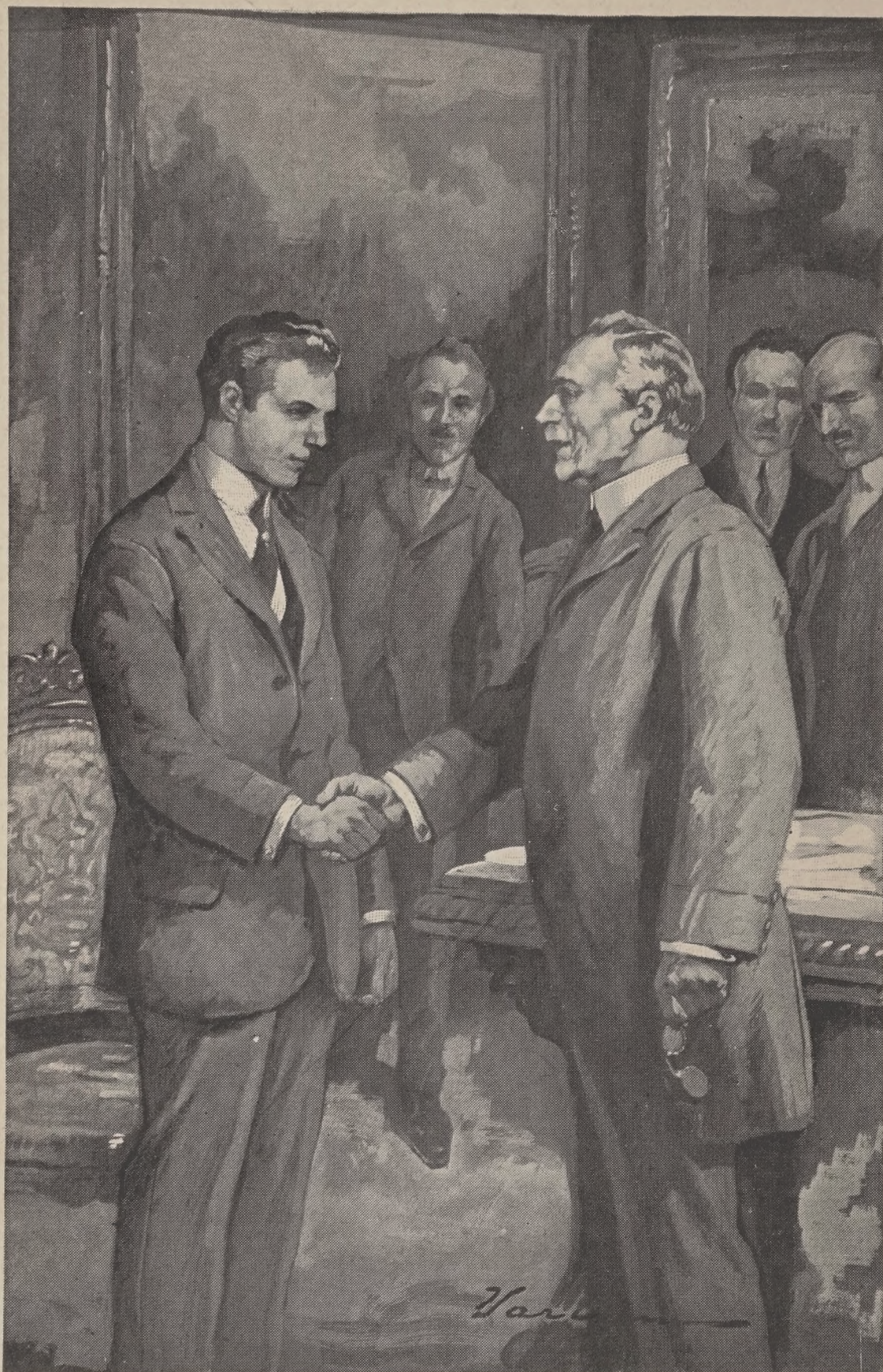
Five minutes later Harry stood in the presence of Mr. A. R. Sheppard himself. The president of the company smiled at him and said:

"Gentlemen, Mr. Dale."

And then Harry saw that other men sat around the sides of the room. He saw Mr. MacMackin, and Mr. Pound, the head of the linings; and the heads of the notions, silk, dress goods and flannel departments.

At any other time he would have noticed the beauty of this office—the grand height of the ceiling, the oil paintings on the walls, the heavy floor rug. Now, however, he was so flustered that all he was conscious of was the triphammer beating of his heart.

"Every year," Mr. Sheppard said, "it is the policy of the House to grant a reward of one hundred dollars to the employee who offers the best suggestion by which the business or the moral tone of the House may be improved. This year the prize goes to a young man, a



“Five minutes later Harry stood in the presence of Mr. Sheppard himself.”

THE SHEPPARD PRIZE

very young man. He wrote a letter—that was all. But behind that letter was a spirit that we hope this House will always maintain, a spirit of courtesy, of good will, and of kindly thought for even the smallest customer. Mr. Dale, it affords me great pleasure to hand to you the Sheppard Prize.”

Five twenty-dollar gold pieces were placed in Harry's hands. He spoke some words of thanks, but what they were he never knew. He found himself shaking hands with everybody in the room. And after that he discovered himself walking back to the cloth department glad to be away where he could gather his scattered thoughts.

But the end was not yet. When he returned to the department it was to find that the news had preceded him. Mr. Claxton led a demonstration in his honor.

“For ten years,” the salesman said, “I’ve been waiting to see the prize come to this department, and at last it’s here. Didn’t I tell

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you you stood a chance for the Sheppard Prize?"

Harry broke away from that, too, after awhile. He got his hat and coat and stole off. As he reached the main floor, he saw a man on a ladder doing something to the big sign that told the floor on which each department did business. As he came closer the man came down from the ladder. Harry saw that a wreath had been hung about the cloth department sign. It was a notice to the whole House that a man from the "cloths" had taken the Sheppard Prize. He knew now why Mr. MacMackin had squeezed his hand so hard up there in Mr. Sheppard's office.

"He's the best boss in the world," Harry told himself huskily. "I hope I'll always make good for him."

(1)

THE NEXT VOLUME OF THIS SERIES WILL BE
"HARRY DALE ON THE ROAD"

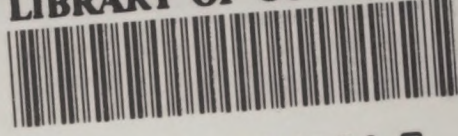
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